

Infant Salvation

by M. J. Firey, D.D.

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The Possibility of Infants
The Key to this Perplexing Subject

By

M. J. FIREY, D.D.

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To
THE "LITTLE CHILDREN"
*of whom the Loving Savior hath said, "Of
such is the kingdom of heaven," this
volume is cheerfully dedicated*
BY THE AUTHOR

PREFACE

It was not the purpose to write a book upon infant salvation when the study of this subject was commenced. The hope was entertained that for his own satisfaction only the writer might reach a conclusion that would be tenable.

To do this it was found necessary to read extensively, not upon infant salvation, for there is little published upon it, but upon relative subjects. Writers have generally sought to reach a conclusion upon this subject either through infant baptism, election, the atonement, or in probation after death, and have not tried to find in the infant itself the capacity for grace, nor in grace the power to save it aside from the means of grace.

The fact that what has been written upon this subject is in theological works and not independent of denominational bias, has made the task more laborious. Writers of the same theological schools have been found at variance with one another, and with scarcely an exception leave the reader under the impression that they were not well assured of the soundness of their own views. The history contained in Part I of this book will convince the reader of this fact; also of another: that old theories have been altered and amended from age to age. There is no subject in theology which gives rise to more inquiry at the present time, because of its unsettled state, than this one of infant salvation. The author has at least satisfied his own mind concerning it.

The book is in two parts: *Part I* contains an historical

review of the treatment of the subject. This review proves that the overwhelming voice of the Church taught that the infant, notwithstanding its inborn depravity and the feebleness of its natural faculties, was not a spiritual imbecile, but had the capacity for, and could become the subject of, saving grace. *Part II* takes up this latter thought, and assumes that on account of the infant's capacity for grace, God must have made some provision whereby it may become a subject of grace even without the use of the means of grace. To call such capable souls into being, and yet not make provision for any except the few who are within reach of the means of grace, is a doctrine so contrary to the character of God, and the teaching of Scripture, that it is not to be entertained for a moment.

In the effort to establish this fact, it is found that the infant is a complete personality, possessing all the faculties of the adult. Despite its feebleness, it also possesses receptivity before it can either accept or reject. In other words, it is at birth in a passive state, exactly the one sought for in the adult before the Holy Spirit can regenerate the soul. The attempt is made to prove that the natural depravity of the infant does not destroy this passivity, or prevent the introduction of saving grace.

It is claimed also that when such a state exists, saving grace need not wait for the means of grace, but can without coercion enter the heart of the infant, take possession, destroy the power of depravity, regenerate the infant soul, and create it an heir of salvation.

The writer is indebted to Wall—the author of “The History of Infant Baptism”—and to Delitzsch’s “Biblical Psychology,” and to other authors and works for valuable hints and suggestions. In order to give weight and authority to certain views, quotations have been freely used and due credit has been given.

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INFANT SALVATION

INTRODUCTION

GREAT diversity exists in the teaching of different branches of the Christian Church concerning certain doctrines. If we seek for its origin it will doubtless be found in the desire to know definitely just what to believe; conscientious belief seeks exactness, completeness, and certainty in doctrine; to secure these, it enters upon the study of God's word, and evolves a system of its own. But equally earnest and conscientious minds arrive at conclusions somewhat different; this is not strange, since different conclusions are reached after the investigation of subjects not so abstruse as some of those in theology. It would be unwise to check this desire to investigate, even tho it should disturb a trifle more the already troubled waters; stagnant, stupefying conservatism has been found to be more injurious to the cause of truth than prudent investigation. The discriminating and conscientious mind is usually conservative, and in the end its conclusion will be found helpful, rather than otherwise. The apparent confusion arising from such investigation is, after all, harmonizing in its tendencies; and unity of spirit, which is ever preferable to absolute unity of doctrine, is the legitimate outgrowth of the conflict. There will come at last, if not unity in doctrine, at least harmony in diversity, with broader, clearer, sounder views of the whole subject.

What has been true of doctrine in general has been true of infant salvation in particular. There has been almost endless speculation concerning it among Catholics and Protestants. Yet the tendency of all this has been to draw the different schools closer together, until among Protestants there is almost absolute harmony in their conclusion, tho there is still great diversity in their doctrines. The effort will be made to make this clear before this work is completed. All agree that the infant that dies will be saved, yet no two denominations are agreed upon the means or manner by which its salvation is effected. A careful history and review of the different theories advanced from time to time will prove both interesting and profitable. To this history and review the first part of this work will be devoted.

There are two radically different classes of teachers among Protestants. One class—the pædobaptists—teach that the infant is a proper subject for saving grace, that it possesses spiritual susceptibility, so that while yet in its infancy it can be an heir of everlasting life.

The antipædobaptists, on the contrary, teach that there is an impassable gulf fixed between the living infant and saving grace. It has a mental and a physical disability; these of necessity make it a spiritual imbecile.

As between the two theories, the first is assumed to be the correct one; it is believed that the scriptures of the Old and New Testaments warrant this assumption. It will be necessary, therefore, to prove that infants are not spiritual imbeciles or incapables. To establish the claims of this is the object of the present work, and for this reason this fact will be kept in mind while tracing the history of infant salvation in the Church. The attention of the reader will be called to the teaching of the Old Testament first, and to the significance of the rite of circumcision.

PART I

CHAPTER I

CIRCUMCISING INFANTS—BAPTISM UNDER THE OLD TESTAMENT

IN Gen. xvii:9, 11, 12 we read: "And God said unto Abraham, thou shalt keep my covenant, thou and thy seed after thee; . . . every man child among you shall be circumcised, . . . and it shall be a token of the covenant betwixt me and you. And he that is eight days old, shall be circumcised among you."

This much is assured from the passage: every "man child of eight days" was to receive circumcision in token of the covenant God made with Abraham, and the receiving of this had special reference even at this early age to the keeping of that covenant by the circumcised one. God must have attached weight to circumcision in one so young; there must have been something connected with it that would be helpful to such infant, even from the time it was circumcised, as well as when it became responsible; otherwise why this haste? It was to be not simply a token of the covenant, but the infant through circumcision also entered into covenant with God. In Deut. xxix:10-18: "Wives," "elders," "officers," and other adults are commanded to enter into covenant with God; not these alone, but "your little ones" also.

Spiritual obedience was the object sought in this cove-

nanting, "lest there should be among you man or woman, or family, or tribe, whose heart turneth away this day from the Lord our God, to go and serve the gods of these nations." Even the little ones are commanded to enter into covenant with God. Circumcision was administered in token of the covenant, and that covenant was to be sacredly kept; to this end even the male infant, but eight days old, was to be circumcised.

The object of circumcision, therefore, was to secure obedience to God. Why, we ask again, was it commanded that infants so young be circumcised if it was useless? It is waste of time to urge this point. But we must advance another step, and show that circumcision was expected to effect a direct spiritual benefit (Rom. ii:28, 29). "For he is not a Jew which is one outwardly; neither is that circumcision which is outward in the flesh; but he is a Jew, which is one inwardly; and circumcision is that of the heart, in the spirit, and not in the letter; whose praise is not of man, but of God." The chief intent then is not outward, but inward; not of the flesh, but "of the heart; in the spirit, and not in the letter; whose praise is not of man, but of God."

Stephen, when addressing the council which arraigned him, said: "Ye stiff-necked, and uncircumcised in heart and ears, ye do always resist the Holy Ghost," etc. (Acts vii:51). Outwardly they were circumcised, but inwardly they were uncircumcised; they had wickedly perverted the intent of the rite, which is, to circumcise the heart; to purify that, and make it obedient to God.

The objector will urge that circumcision failed to effect the result aimed at; true, it did in very many instances; but what is there that God has ordained to save, and to assist fallen man, that has not failed very often? Redemption itself has; the word preached also, yet He says:

"It shall not return unto him void, but it shall accomplish that which I please, and it shall prosper in the thing whereto I sent it." So with circumcision, its intent was spiritual; it failed often in accomplishing the result. Because of this partial failure, Paul anticipates the objection and asks: "What profit is there of circumcision? Much every way"; he answers, and then adds: "For what if some did not believe? shall their unbelief make the faith of God without effect? God forbid."

So the objector now asks, What good could have come by circumcision, in a spiritual sense, to the infant but eight days old? It can not be active? It is not necessary to prove that the infant is active in any full sense, since God is active; and if He by His covenant includes the tender infant with the adult, it is not for us to call its wisdom in question nor to stand in the way, but to acquiesce and to execute His will. We dare not assume either that God can not through circumcision bless the infant, simply because it can not be active also. If, as Paul says, the positive unbelief of the circumcised could not make the activity of the faith of God without effect (Rom. iii: 3), why should the entire absence of that unbelief in the infant make it ineffectual? Surely the latter state is more favorable than that of unbelief; who knows but that the condition of the infant heart is such that it enables God's activity to bless it spiritually. This is the firm conviction of the author, and the attempt will be made to prove this in the second part of this work.

It is not herein claimed that God was absolutely confined to circumcision; by no means! Abraham was righteous, and called of God, before he was circumcised (Rom. iv: 3): "Abraham believed God, and it was counted unto him for righteousness." Active belief before he was circumcised was sufficient; but even Abraham had to be circumcised afterward. "And he received the sign of circumcision; a

seal of the righteousness of the faith, which he had, yet being uncircumcised, that he might be the father of all them that believe, tho they be not circumcised; that righteousness might be imputed unto them, who are not of the circumcision only, but who also walk in the steps of that faith of our father Abraham, which he had, being yet uncircumcised" (Rom. iv: 11, 12).

Abraham was ninety years old when circumcised; his circumcision was not necessary to initiate righteousness; neither was it in the case of Noah, Melchizedek, nor Job; these latter were not circumcised. Neither is it herein maintained that God's willingness to save was, in the case of infants, bound to circumcision, and to that only. All that is designed to prove is, that infants are not spiritual imbeciles, and that they are capable of becoming subjects of divine grace even before baptism, as Abraham was before circumcision. There is something in common between the infant and its Savior; else how could it enter into covenant relation with Him? There was something in circumcision also which favored its after-life of obedience. In no case was the infant treated as an incapable, or certainly its circumcision would have been delayed until this incapability was overcome by age. The effect of circumcision, whatever it was, must have been immediate and direct, as well as spiritual; because obedience to God's command brings immediate and direct results upon all. The result may not be complete or perfect, because the subject is not old enough, but for the purpose intended it is complete.

Circumcision was not the only rite performed in behalf of infants in Old-Testament times. Baptism was also practised by the Jews. It was, however, only necessary for proselytes and their children. The Israelites reckoned it unnecessary for themselves, as they all had entered into covenant with God at the time they received the law from

Mount Sinai, at which time they were all washed, or baptized. "And the Lord said unto Moses, go unto all the people, and sanctify them to-day and to morrow, and let them wash their clothes, and be ready against the third day; and the Lord will come down in the sight of all the people upon Mount Sinai" (Exod. xix:10).

The washing of their clothes, or the body, was believed to be the equivalent of baptism, and this baptism of the parents at Sinai was deemed sufficient for all their descendants. Paul (1 Cor. x:2) also says: All our fathers "were baptized unto Moses in the cloud, and in the sea." On both these occasions they were in some sense baptized, and their descendants were so profited thereby that they were included in the covenant without a special baptism. Paul in addition to this refers to "divers washings"—*baptisnois*—which were customary among the Jews (Heb. ix:10), as for instance when any ceremonial uncleanness was incurred.

But proselytes, whose forefathers had never been baptized, must be both circumcised and baptized, in order to enter into covenant with God; all children born to them after such baptism were considered clean, and therefore needed not to be baptized, but all those born to such proselyte parents before their baptism were required to be baptized. Infants therefore were baptized, and their unconsciousness was no bar to their reception into the covenant. The wish of the parent to dedicate them to the true God was all-sufficient.

The only reason assigned by Jewish writers for this early dedication of their infants is "that it is out of the reach of any doubt or controversy, that this is for their good; it was not necessary to wait and see whether the child, when come to age, would be willing to engage himself in the covenant of the true God, or not; . . . the benefit of being dedicated to Jehovah is evident and unquestionable. One

may privilege another, tho he be incapable of knowing it, but one ought not to disprivilege a person without his knowledge. They judge, therefore, that a proselyte had no more need to expect his child's consent to be cleansed by baptism, or washing from the unclean and accursed estate in which he was born, than a natural Jew had to make any such delay in giving his child circumcision, the seal of the covenant, which delay, instead of being cautious, would have been impious." *

Infancy under the Old Testament was therefore no barrier to either circumcision or baptism. Female infants of proselytes entered into covenant through baptism alone. The Talmud says: "When a proselyte is received, he must be circumcised, and when he is cured (of the wound of circumcision) they baptize him in the presence of two men, saying, 'Behold he is an Israelite in all things.' Or if it be a woman, the women lead her to the waters," etc.†

As the proselyte could as well be an infant as an adult, we understand the relation the infants sustained to their God. They were not looked upon as incapables. One is forcibly impressed by the fact that the Jewish economy made no distinction between the adult and infant; both were, whether proselytes or not, accepted without distinction, and on precisely the same terms. We need not be perplexed with the fact that circumcision was annulled by Christ, nor with the fact that the baptism practised by the Jews was not Christian baptism: it is enough that they recognized in the infant the power to enter into covenant relations with God, and that those relations were certainly spiritual in character, whatever else they may have been. It is also proof conclusive that in that early day, by divine command, as well as by human acceptance, certain means were deemed neces-

* Wall's "History of Infant Baptism," Introduction, p. 7.

† *Idem*, Introduction, p. 4.

sary to complete this spiritual relation between the child and its God; that the infant was not on account of its natural helplessness regarded beyond the reach of such means, nor incapable of spiritual blessing through them. Additional light may be thrown upon this capability of infants from the Old-Testament scriptures; they furnish examples of infants who, even before they were born, received favor from God (Psalm xxii:10): "I was cast upon thee from the womb. Thou art my God from my mother's belly."

This is spoken prophetically of the Savior; as it antedates birth, it specially deserves recognition: "Listen isles unto me, and hearken, ye people from far. The Lord hath called me from the womb." "And now saith the Lord that formed me from the womb to be his servant," etc. (Isa. xlix:1, 5). Tho prophetic of the Savior, yet these are not exceptional passages, but are in exact keeping with the others which have direct reference to human beings; for instance, the prophet Jeremiah says: "Before I formed thee in the belly, I knew thee, and before thou comest forth out of the womb, I sanctified thee, and I ordained thee a prophet among the nations" (Jer. i:5).

This is spoken concerning the prophet himself. It will hardly be claimed that this knowing and sanctifying of Jeremiah has reference simply to a ceremonial setting apart of Jeremiah to his prophetic office—simply predestinating him. When this previous knowing is ascribed to Jehovah by the Scriptures, it implies more than mere prescience; this much God knows of every individual, but Jeremiah's case is peculiar, so that when God says, "I knew thee," it implies a real internal operation of the Holy Spirit upon him. It will also be observed that the knowing him is a fact which preceded the one of sanctifying him, or setting him apart to the sacred office, and therefore is not to be regarded as a part of that act, but wholly independent of it. We

can view it in no other light than that of a real work of grace. This is the view which many commentators take.

The case of Samuel is also in point; tho not so extreme as that of Jeremiah, yet it comes within the class of infants which in Old-Testament times received special divine grace. He was given in answer to the prayers of his mother; his name Samuel means "the asked or heard of God." Before his birth he was dedicated by his mother to the office of a Nazarite. As soon as he was weaned, she brought him to the tabernacle at Shiloh, where she solemnly consecrated him. A sacrifice was offered at this consecration. To Eli she said: "For this child I have prayed, and the Lord hath given me my petition, which I asked of him. Therefore also I lent him to the Lord; as long as he liveth, he shall be lent to the Lord." It is added, "And he [Samuel] worshiped the Lord there," tho only a weaned child. The conduct of Hannah, from first to last, proves beyond a doubt that infants were in her day regarded as capable of receiving blessing from God. Her prayers for Samuel before he was born, her consecration of him at so early an age, assures us that it was the belief of the pious that the tenderest infant was within the scope of mercy and grace. In addition to this, the fact that Eli received him at this tender age is proof that he approved Hannah's course. From this time forth Samuel remained in the tabernacle, and as we learn "ministered before the Lord, being a child," etc.

Additional light may be thrown upon this subject by reference to the case of Esau and Jacob (Gen. xxv: 22, 26). This marvelous instance of intelligence and design in the unborn infant is a psychological mystery, yet it is a boldly recorded fact at which the prophet Hosea, more than a thousand years after, did not stumble. He accepts the marvelous display of intelligence and design as genuine (Hosea xii: 3): "He took his brother by the heel," etc.

It is accepted by the prophet as an undisputed fact. The act itself would have passed as one having no significance but for the intention on the part of Jacob. Inexplicable as it is to us, it is charged that it was done with the intention of securing the birthright, and thereby supplanting his brother Esau. It was this particular act that induced his father to name him Jacob (the supplanter). With this incident as a psychological mystery we have nothing to do, but it affords additional and indisputable proof of the point before us, which is, that infants were not regarded in Old Testament times as incapable imbeciles, they possessed some degree of susceptibility. This fact is of the first importance to the subject we have in hand, for if it once be established that infants possess spiritual susceptibility, the conclusion follows as a matter of course, that some adequate provision has been made to meet the demands of such susceptibility; since it is unreasonable to suppose that a God of infinite mercy would attempt to save a lost world, and at the same time pass by or overlook such infants, whether they be of heathen or Christian parents. For the present, we are not concerned about how, or by what means, they are to be reached, but simply with the fact that they are capables, and possess susceptibility.

This fact established, we are ready at once to declare against the antipædobaptists who regard the infants as spiritual imbeciles because they can not hear, and believe the word; and accept instead the pædobaptist views, which believe they possess spiritual susceptibility, and that provision has been made, so that none of them perish.

But lest some may think the conclusion too hastily drawn because the New Testament has not been consulted, let us reserve our final conclusion till we inquire further.

CHAPTER II

THE NEW TESTAMENT—INFANTS NOT SPIRITUAL IMBECILES — THE GREAT COMMISSION — THE APOSTLES ON INFANT SALVATION

PASSING then to the New Testament, do we not find the same fact inculcated, and that at its very threshold? The case of John the Baptist affords most striking proof of it. The prophecy respecting him says: "He shall be filled with the Holy Ghost even from his mother's womb." This is unmistakable; no room is left for doubt. It is boldly affirmed that the Holy Spirit can not only enter the infant soul of John, but also that he shall be filled with it. Following in the wake of the Old Testament, such an example in the New must, in conjunction with those instances, remove all doubt. It does more: it will serve to teach us that the Holy Spirit is not absolutely bound in its operations by the use of outward means. Furthermore, while examples of this kind recorded in Scriptures are few, and in some respects extraordinary, yet are we not safe in concluding that they are not on that account the only ones; but when compared with the multitudes out of each generation which have been similarly possessed by the Holy Spirit, these may be as small in number as were those the prophet John saw in his apocalyptic vision, compared with "the great multitude" he also saw, that "stood before the throne and before the lamb, which no man could number." It is not reasonable to conclude that because they are the only recorded instances of such blessing, they are of necessity the only

infants so highly favored of God; as well might we assert that the prophets mentioned in the Bible are the only ones that ministered to Israel, and Judah; or that the comparatively few righteous there indicated comprise the sum-total of Old-Testament saints. It is reasonable to assume that the recorded cases of infants sanctified, are few indeed compared with the innumerable multitude of the tender ones who have, with Jeremiah and John, been similarly blessed.

Hitherto attention has been called to the extraordinary instances in the Bible, also to the universal practise of circumcision among the Jews, and the uniform belief they entertained as to the duty of infants covenanting with God. Does all proof of the point before us end with these? By no means, for one of the most striking, in the form of example, is that furnished by the Savior Himself. "And they brought young children [*brephe*, infants—Luke] to him that he should put his hands upon them and pray," etc.; "and he took them up in his arms, put his hands on them, and blessed them."

The fact that these infants were brought to Jesus is *prima facie* evidence that those who brought them were moved to do so because they looked upon them as capable of receiving blessing. Whether they learned this from the Old Testament, or from the teachings of the Savior, it matters not; the Savior blessed them.

It is true the disciples rebuked those who brought them, but that was not because they thought very young children could not receive blessing, but because they did not want the interruption. This is the view one of our most critical commentators takes of it. The disciples, no doubt, also believed the Master could bless them, as those who brought them did; but they thought that interrupting Him, and themselves, "In their converse on high, and important

subjects," was an impertinence that deserved rebuke.* This being the case, their conduct must not be interpreted as indicating their disbelief in the capacity of the infants to receive blessing, or even that their presentation to the Savior on proper occasions was of doubtful utility. The Savior's displeasure at the disciples' conduct, His command to them, and His blessing of the little ones, all prove conclusively that they did not sufficiently value this duty; while His own words, "Of such is the Kingdom of God," imply that to bring little children to Him was the manifest duty of parents under all circumstances. They imply that a great wrong is done the infants in not doing it, and that those are inexcusable who "forbid" them to come.

An authority says respecting this: "A beautiful custom led parents to bring their children at an early age to the synagogues, that they might have the prayers and blessings of the elders. After the father of the child, says the Talmud, had laid his hands on his child's head, he led him to the elders, and they also blessed him and prayed that he might grow up famous in the law, faithful in marriage, and abundant in good work."† The Talmud, which embodied the canonical and civil laws of the Jews, and was in existence one hundred and fifty years before Christ, sanctioned this custom of blessing little children; and now that the Savior approves it, who can with any show of reason oppose it? Christ's language concerning this custom, as well as His conduct toward infants also, implies that they were not spiritual incapables; they were not to be forbidden, but suffered "to come." In another place they are said to "receive the Kingdom of Heaven." It will not do to press this language too far; the scope of its meaning can not be as broad as if applied to adults; but in view of all the facts,

* Alford in his notes on Mark x : 13.

† Geikie's "Life of Christ," vol. ii., p. 373.

who would dare affirm that infants could not "receive," or "come," or be "forbidden"? In our desire to escape credulity and superstition, we often err by going to the other extreme; rationalism is a worse foe of spirituality than credulity. But is it credulity to believe that the infant possesses enough of spiritual capacity; that it may be said to "receive" and to "come" to the Savior, and also to be blessed?

The fact of infantile susceptibility is established, and will be of great service in elucidating this subject. It is *prima facie* evidence that God has made some provision for all infants, and they all must be within its reach, since He would never bring such beings into existence and yet leave most of them without saving grace. This would be contrary to His nature. We are therefore encouraged to seek for a divine scheme which will make it possible for all infants to become the subjects of saving grace, even without the use of the ordinary means.

If the Savior so far recognized their susceptibility as to bless them, that should end dispute. They were certainly capable of receiving blessing, and therefore proper subjects for baptism. But it is asked, Why, if infants are proper subjects for baptism, is not infant baptism specifically commanded in the New Testament? The answer is that there was no necessity for any such command; the people from their previous training did not need it. The fact that they brought their children to Jesus of their own will proves that their previous instruction left no room for such command, and had it been given it would have been superfluous. On the other hand, if, in the New Dispensation, the old way was to be so radically changed that infants, under it, were to be regarded as incapables, then certainly we would expect some teaching of the Savior to that effect, because in the Old there had been building up a structure that must of necessity be torn down before a new one could

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stand in its place. If, therefore, the purposes of the one antagonized those of the other, a command for the demolition of the one was necessary, and after that the erection of the other. Concerning this Dr. Schaff says: * "True, the New Testament contains no express command to baptize infants; such a command could not agree with the spirit of the Gospel; but still less does the New Testament forbid infant baptism, as it ought to be expected to do, in view of the universal custom of the Jews to admit their children, by circumcision on the eighth day after their birth, into the fellowship of the old covenant."

Why should those who reject infant baptism lay so much stress upon the fact that the New Testament contains no express command to baptize infants? Certainly the force of the Old-Testament teaching, projected into the New by the Savior's conduct toward infants, should reconcile doubt, and silence dispute. A positive command to baptize them was uncalled for. There were none who doubted their fitness; there should be none now. If the practise under the Old Testament had partaken of the nature of an abuse, the Savior would not have hesitated to expose it, as He did so many other abuses. He certainly would never have taken infants in His arms and blessed them, had He considered them spiritual imbeciles.

Furthermore, it is worthy of note that the Old-Testament scriptures drew no line of distinction between the infant and the adult, so far as the means to be employed in introducing them into proper relations with God were concerned; the infants were circumcised just as the adult; sacrifices were offered for them, as for the adult; the proselyte infants were baptized, just as the adult; they were regarded as capable of entering into covenant with God, as the adult; and were included in all the covenanted blessings, just as

* "Church History," vol. i., p. 125.

the adult. No distinction whatever was made between them in any of these essential particulars. The prime object in all these means was to introduce the subject into closer spiritual union with God, and to foster it therein. We should not on these accounts expect any specific command concerning the baptism of infants. There is, it is true, a general command to baptize; and while "hearing" and "believing the Word" are mentioned as conditions preparatory to it, yet who would dare to baptize even an adult, if those conditions are interpreted according to the letter; for who can know certainly that all adults truly believe? Is it not true, that in myriads of instances adults have been baptized who did not believe, as their after-life gave proof? Infants are more worthy of baptism than such persons. Again, those who insist that the subjects must first be old enough to hear the Word and believe before they are baptized, assume that hearing the Word and believing it are the only avenues to salvation. They teach that infants are not fit subjects for grace, and therefore reject the Words—"He took them up in his arms, put his hands upon them, and blessed them." Either He blessed these children or He did not; if He blessed them, it was a spiritual blessing, and those infants were capable of receiving it. If He did not bless them, then the inspired Word is misleading. Which horn of the dilemma will the reader choose?

It is folly for any one to discredit under the New Testament the same susceptibility in infants that was recognized in them under the Old. It is true that the rite of circumcision ceased with the Old. It was not enjoined in the Great Commission, but baptism was, and therefore took its place. And baptism demands as much susceptibility in the infant as did circumcision, which rite was commanded to be practised upon babes but eight days old.*

* Genesis xvii. 10-14.

The act of our Savior in blessing little children, together with the declarations He made in connection with it, is of such striking importance that every obscure or doubtful passage relating to infants must be interpreted by them. If in that act He blessed them, and in those declarations declared them already subjects of grace and fit for heaven, we should look for some extraordinary proof to the contrary before we doubt the susceptibility of infants: certainly for something more than a mere inference from some leading passage of Scripture; something more than the mere absence of recorded instances of infant baptizings (admitting that such is the case); something more, also, than the mere objection that "they can not hear and believe the word."

Let it be repeated also that if in the New Dispensation there was to be such a wide departure, such a radical change as to exclude infants entirely from all means of grace, and indeed from grace itself, we should have had some positive declaration from our Lord to that end. If the infant as such has no susceptibility, and therefore must await the dawn of consciousness before anything can be done for it, or before it can have any standing in the kingdom of grace, certainly we should have some positive declaration to that effect. If so great a change were to take place in the plan of salvation, or some radical change to be made in the means to be employed, which threw the infant out of all harmony with the new régime, relegating it to the realm of absolute spiritual imbecility, then surely we should have been informed of it; but since not a word of that kind has been uttered, nor a line written; since the Old Testament made no distinction between the infant and the adult, and since the Savior Himself capped the climax by blessing infants, and declaring them subjects of grace already, we must conclude that they not only possess spiritual susceptibility,

but that grace can even find for itself an abode in their hearts.

It will be well to note at some length the objection made to infant baptism, on the ground that infants are essentially excluded by the Great Commission, because "the word *matheteuein*, preceding the *baptizein*, shuts them out as incapable of both." We quote the Great Commission in full: "Go ye therefore, and teach ["make disciples of,"—New Version] all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost, teaching them to observe all things whatsoever I have commanded you, and lo! I am with you alway, even unto the end of the world" (Matt. xxviii. 19 and 20).

If this commission does invalidate infant baptism, that would be conclusive evidence that the infant is a spiritual imbecile, and we must therefore seek for other grounds than the susceptibility of the infant on which to base its salvation.

Antipædobaptists, with the utmost confidence, claim that the Great Commission affords proof conclusive against it. Dr. Carson says: "I am willing to hang the whole controversy upon this passage. Even if I find another command enjoining the baptism of the infants of believers, I shall not move an inch from my position. . . . I would gainsay an angel from heaven who would say that this Commission may extend to any but believers (adults). Here I stand entrenched, and I defy the ingenuity of earth and hell to drive me from my position." *

Howell says: "Infant baptism is prohibited by the Apostolic Commission." † Dr. Fuller says: "The argument from the Commission is distinct, conclusive, irrevocable; even if infant baptism could be established by other por-

* "Seiss's Baptist System Examined," pp. 169, 170.

† *Idem*, p. 23.

tions of the Bible, it would not, could not, be baptism under the Commission."*

Some of these views betray a hostile rather than a careful and candid spirit, since they "would gainsay an angel from heaven," and even "other portions of the Bible" to the contrary could not change their belief.

Dr. Shaff says: "They (the antipædobaptists) reject infant baptism as an essential innovation of the sacrament, since an infant can not hear the gospel, nor repent, and make profession of faith."†

The first objection is that the Commission demands that the subject be first taught; the infant can not be, and therefore is not a proper subject for baptism. The soundness or unsoundness of this objection depends upon the full meaning of "*matheteusate*." The word is in the imperative mood and rendered "teach" in the King James translation; but is this the whole meaning or but part of it? We shall see. Even the marginal rendering has it, "or make disciples, or Christians of"; this at once throws doubt upon the first rendering. The New Version has it, "make disciples of." Alford renders it "make disciples of," and adds: "The *matheteuein* consists of two parts, the initiatory, admissory rite, and the subsequent teaching." In his comment on the following verse he says: "This teaching must in greater part follow baptism." Scott says: "Two words in this commission are translated, teach and teaching; but are of different meaning." He refers to "*matheteusate*" and "*didaskontes*." "The former," he says, "means the general instruction necessary to bring men to profess themselves disciples of Christ; the other relates to their subsequent instruction in all the various parts of Christianity. Not only they who have learnt and been instructed, but

* "Seiss's Baptist System Examined," p. 295.

† "Creeds of Christendom," vol. i. p. 846.

they also who are to learn and are to be instructed, are included under the name disciple. Therefore are infants to be baptized."

Matthew Henry, tho not critical, does not confine the meaning of *matheteusate* to teaching, but to discipling, which includes baptism.

Bengel says: "*Matheteuein* is to make disciples, and embraces baptism and teaching in this place." Stier says: "Suffice it that the word must retain its full and comprehensive meaning, and not be confounded with mere preaching or mere teaching." Olshausen says, with good reason, that "the construction admits nothing else than that the two participles—baptizing and teaching—are constituents of the *matheteuein*."

Lange says: "Make all nations into disciples. And how is this to be accomplished? First by 'baptizing' all who are to be taught in infancy,—and then by 'teaching' the same. The first general direction embraces the whole; it declares their whole vocation." Jamieson, Fausset, and Brown explain it in this way also.

It is evident that the meaning of *matheteusate* is here intended to be broad enough to include both the participles, *baptizontes* and *didaskontes*—both baptizing and teaching,—and that in the case of adults the teaching may precede the baptizing, and in the case of infants the baptizing may precede the teaching. Stier says: "We may say with exegetical propriety that it must depend upon the closer relations and necessity of the case whether the baptizing or the teaching should rather take the precedence; the word *matheteusate* decides nothing on that question."

Wesley says: "Baptizing and teaching are the two great branches of that general design, and these are to be determined by the circumstances of things, which made it necessary in baptizing adult Jews, or heathens, to teach them

before they were baptized; in disciplining their children, to baptize them before they were taught."

It is clear that the error of antipædobaptists originates in rendering *matheteuo* "to teach" only; if that were correct, it would be necessary to teach before you baptized. But while their error originated in this, there seems to be no reason for its continuance in the face of the light which a correct exegesis has thrown upon this text. It is worthy of note here that the apostles laid but little stress upon preliminary teaching, even in case of adults. The three thousand converts at Pentecost received but little instruction. Philip's instruction to the eunuch was very brief. "The Philippian jailer, and all his,"—but a sentence or two; the truth is, the main part of their discipling was done, even in the case of adults, after they had been baptized. "Teaching them to observe all things whatsoever I have commanded you" is, according to the antipædobaptist argument, a necessary duty before baptism, and yet we are safe in concluding that this has never been observed, and never will be. The discipling is a work that continues through life, and therefore most all of it must be done after baptism. How much of it? Who is wise enough to answer correctly? May not all as well as part of it be done after baptism? If it be still maintained that all must be taught effectually "to observe all things," as Christ commanded, before they are baptized, then baptism must be deferred until the dying hour, and even then it must be withheld from many because they will not have been taught "to observe all things." This latter clause contemplates a life-long teaching and learning.

If the Great Commission absolutely rejects infants for baptism, it must do it for the reasons alleged: because they can not be taught and do not believe. These necessary conditions only increase the difficulty, for in taking this

stand you assume that the baptizer must know that all he baptizes have been sufficiently taught, even "all things," and that they are not only capable of believing, but that they do really believe, and are fully qualified for baptism beforehand, by believing. No mistake must be made; everything must be in keeping with the letter of the command. The claim of antipædobaptists becomes absurd when viewed in this manner. Is it not true that it is impossible for even an expert to know that an adult is fully qualified for baptism according to the standard of the antipædobaptist? It is known that a large proportion of baptized adults never become truly pious; their instruction and belief do not lead them to repentance; the confidence reposed in them was misplaced. Is it not folly, therefore, to insist upon conditions for baptism which must, by the practical results, prove such claims utopian and impracticable—even bordering on the absurd? It is certainly unscriptural to impose impossible conditions upon either the baptizer or the baptized, because there is a certainty and discrimination required that only superhuman intelligence bordering on omniscience could cope with. The Gospel proceeds upon a more generous basis than this; it imposes no such conditions upon the baptizer. It says: "The kingdom of heaven is like a net that was cast into the sea, and gathered of every kind, which when it was filled they drew on the beach, and they sat down, and gathered the good into vessels, but the bad they cast away; so shall it be at the end of the world" (Matt. xiii: 47, etc.). The assorting-time is not at baptism, but at "the end of the world." It is the work of God's servants, through baptism and all the means of grace, to "gather of every kind"; it is God's work to discern between the evil and the good; we can not do it with anything like accuracy. As in the parable of the tares, we are told to let them alone—"let both tares

and wheat grow together until the harvest." The servants asked that they might go and pull them up, "but he said, Nay; lest while ye gather up the tares, ye root up also the wheat with them. Let both grow until the harvest, which is the end of the world; then the Son of Man will send forth his angels to gather first the tares, and burn them." The angels are to do this, and not men. As with the good and bad fishes, and the wheat and tares, so with subjects for baptism. We are not required to sit in judgment upon those who come to us or may be brought to us; we can not discriminate, and to assume such a rôle is to arrogate to ourselves superhuman intelligence. The good and the bad are to be baptized; the kingdom of heaven on earth receives both until the judgment. With us, if we attempt to discriminate, it will be mere guesswork.

Even Philip and the apostles baptized unworthy persons. Simon Magus was baptized, and yet the sequel showed that "he had neither part nor lot in the matter." He was still "in the gall of bitterness, and in the bond of iniquity." Did not Paul write to the Philippians (xiii: 13): "For many walk, of whom I have told you often, and now tell you even weeping, that they are the enemies of the cross of Christ"?

John's warnings to six of the seven churches of Asia also prove that the apostles did not attempt to determine whether those they baptized had first been properly taught, nor whether they truly believed. We therefore conclude that the antipædobaptist interpretation of the Great Commission is at fault; it tortures the Savior's meaning out of all reason, and extorts another He never intended to convey. Before leaving this important part of our subject, it will be well to note the Commission as Mark records it. The difference is striking at the outset; instead of "make disciples of all the nations," the command is, "Go ye into all the world,

and preach the gospel to every creature,"—to the whole creation. In the New Version instead of *matheteusate*, *keruxate* is used; instead of "make disciples of," the command is, "Go, preach." The Commission is not all comprehended in *keruxate*, as in *matheteusate*. The word *preach* does not include baptism; however, Mark afterward mentions it. *Matheteusate* includes it. In Matthew, to be baptized and to be taught are requisites in the disciples; in Mark, they are belief and baptism, with the stress laid upon belief, for "He that believeth not shall be damned." Now if this is to be interpreted in the letter, there is in it a difficulty respecting belief, as there is respecting baptism; in the other, if we reject infants because they are improper subjects for baptism, how are we to know when they are old enough to believe, in order to be baptized? Is it possible for us to know this? And yet, if it be right to set ourselves up as judges in these matters, we must first prove that we do know this. The truth is, that the antipædobaptist attempts to prove too much, hence proves nothing. Well does Stier ask: "With what age or year does the susceptibility to receive the Holy Ghost begin? Or to put the same question in another way, Who that honors the word of Scripture can unconditionally deny to childhood this susceptibility after Luke i: 15, or still otherwise; did not the sacred youth of Jesus, holy from the beginning in the spirit, obtain a sanctification for human nature in its earliest age?" *

This latter view was first advanced by Irenæus in the second century, and has since been echoed and reechoed through the centuries as safe and sound. But the anti-pædobaptists are not moved by any of these things. An authority among them says that baptism is to be administered only after the candidates give "credible evidence that

* "Words of Jesus," vol. iii., p. 812 (1868).

they have been regenerated by the spirit, or, in other words, have entered by faith into communion of Christ's death and resurrection,—and to those who have previously repented and believed.”* Neither Dr. Strong nor any other can tell who truly believes and who does not; can tell at what age active belief may be exercised by the subjects, or when they first enter “by faith into the communion of Christ's death, or that they have previously repented and believed.” This standard is a human one, professedly drawn from the word of God, but it is a mistake and for abundant reasons, both psychological and Scriptural.

There is another reason why we can not press Mark xvi: 16 as the antipædobaptist does. If the infant can not believe and be baptized, neither is it in a state to be saved at death. It is distinctly said: “He that believeth and is baptized shall be saved; he that believeth not shall be damned.” The infant, therefore, is lost; it can not believe. But in order to escape this conclusion the antipædobaptist says: “True, it is in a lost condition at death. Yet it is saved withal.” How? Dr. Strong says: “Infants are incapable of personal faith, but since Christ has died for all, we have reason to believe that provision is made for their reception of Christ in some other way.” What is the way? He says: “It seems most probable that the work of regeneration may be performed by the spirit in connection with the infant soul's first view of Christ in the other world.”†

It may seem “most probable” to such as the writer of it, but to others it appears contrary to the whole tenor of the Old Testament, also to the Savior's words and conduct toward children. Did He not say: “Except ye be converted, and become as little children, ye shall in no wise enter into the kingdom of heaven”? Did not His blessing little

* Dr. Strong's “Biblical Theology,” p. 530.

† *Idem*, p. 355.

children before they were old enough to believe, and before they died, show that they are not spiritual imbeciles, tho they can not hear and actively believe the Gospel?

Tho the infant can not actively believe because of its helplessness and unconsciousness, yet it is not in a blank nor in an imbecile state; it is only weak—a budding consciousness out of which a full-blown one is sure to come. Has this germinal state no spiritual susceptibility? Those who reject infant baptism so teach. This germinal state will be dealt with at length in several chapters in Part II. In them the attempt will be made to prove that the infant is possessed of susceptibility, also that it can have faith, and that it can be saved, before it dies: for the present we dismiss that phase of the subject. We shall now also dismiss the Great Commission under the firm conviction that, properly understood, it does not antagonize infant baptism, nor does it by logical inference teach that the infant is an imbecile; but, on the other hand, when taken in connection with the fact that the Old Testament made no distinction between infants and adults, and that the Savior practically sanctioned this in the New Testament by blessing them, and even exceeded it in declaring that they were already of the kingdom of heaven: in view of these, it can not be that the Savior contradicted in the Great Commission what He had previously taught and practised.

Do the teaching and practise of the apostles recognize spiritual susceptibility in the infants, or do they not? At the outset, let us have before us certain rules, which need no argument to commend them. First: The Savior performed no act in blessing souls in His life upon earth which His disciples could not perform also. “Verily, verily I say unto you, he that believeth on me, the works that I do, shall he do also; and *greater works* than these shall he do, because I go unto my Father” (John xiv:12). If, therefore,

He blessed infants, the apostles could also. Second: Unless we find that the apostles' teaching, and practise toward infants, so far contradicted the Savior's as to establish infant imbecility beyond a doubt, we are then warranted in believing that they possess susceptibility. Third: If there be no direct teaching or practise on the part of the apostles in which infants are certainly excluded, but on the other hand the circumstances and their language are such as to make it possible for them to be included among those the apostles baptized, then in view of what Christ did for infants, and because He said the apostles should do even greater things than He, we can have no doubt but that infants were regarded fit subjects for baptism and that the apostles did not regard them spiritually impotent.

We are ready to admit with Dr. Schaff that the New Testament contains no express command to baptize infants; but neither does it contain a command forbidding it, which it should if baptism were to be discontinued. Under the Old Testament it was administered to all proselytes. Under the New Dispensation, all who became disciples became such as proselytes. The Savior commanded that in this work of proselyting, the proselytes were to baptize "all nations." If the Old Testament accepted infants of eight days, and the New adopted the same seal—baptism—by what kind of logic are we to exclude infants from baptism under the New? How are they to baptize "all nations" and yet exclude so large a part of them? How misleading that command, if infants are excluded, since they could be discipled, at least so far as baptism is concerned!

It is due the reader to state that positive data concerning infant baptism as practised by the apostles are wanting; this fact is admitted by pædobaptist writers. Neander says: "The data which we possess would argue a non-apostolical origin of the rite." Meyer says: "The baptism of infants

is very old, but its origin can not be traced anywhere; meanwhile it is no more forbidden in the New Testament than it is expressly enjoined." Dr. Schaff says: "On the subject of baptism, the apostolic origin of infant baptism is denied not only by Baptists, but also by many pseudobaptist divines." Neither of these writers just quoted discards infant baptism. Neander admits that it can not be proven to be of apostolical origin. Meyer thinks it no more forbidden than enjoined in the New Testament. "Others," says Schaff, "deny its apostolical origin, but they are pseudobaptists."

In the apostle's day, no extreme views respecting baptism prevailed; Jesus, we are told (John iv:2), never baptized, and Paul, doubtless because there was a disposition in Corinth already to abuse the rite, had occasion to ask: "Were ye baptized in the name of Paul? I thank God I baptized none of you but Crispus and Gaius."*

In reply to Neander and Meyer, Dr. Schaff says: "On the contrary, we have positive arguments for the apostolic origin and character of infant baptism, first in the fact that circumcision as truly prefigured baptism as the Passover did the Lord's Supper; then in the organic relation of parents and children; in the nature of the new covenant as even more comprehensive than the old; in the universal virtue of Christ as the Redeemer of all sexes, classes, and ages; and especially in the import of His own infancy, which has redeemed and sanctified the infantile age; in His invitation to children whom He assures of a title to the kingdom of heaven, and whom therefore He certainly would not leave without the way and means of entering it; in the words of the institution, which plainly look to the Christianizing, not merely of individuals, but of whole nations, including of course the children; in the declaration of Peter, at the

* Dr. Smith's "Antiquities," vol. i., p. 162.

first administration of the ordinance of baptism, that this promise of forgiveness of sins and of the Holy Ghost was to the Jews and their children; in the five instances in the New Testament of the baptism of whole families where the presence of children, in most cases, is far more probable than the absence of children in all; and finally in the universal practise of the early Church.”* Stier says: “We must understand the letter of scripture in connection with all that it presupposes, and all its consequences; so understanding it, there will be no difficulty about the baptism of infants. We must not hold to the written word of God in such a mechanical and foolishly literal spirit as that of Ribbeck, to whom historical proof that the apostles baptized children, and decrees of general councils, would avail nothing, if there were no literal command in the New Testament.”†

It is useless to quote authors who disagree with Neander and Meyer; there are hosts of them, and some the brightest intellects in the Church from Origen to the present time; therefore we shall at once come to consider those instances recorded wherein baptism was performed by the apostles, and see what light can be obtained from them.

“And a certain woman named Lydia, a seller of purple, of the city of Thyatira, one that worshiped God, heard us; whose heart the Lord opened to give heed unto the things which were spoken by Paul. And when she was baptized, and her household, she besought us,” etc. (Acts xvi: 14, 15).

There is nothing in this that throws any doubt upon our minds respecting the virtue of infant baptism; but, on the other hand, the fact that Lydia is the only one who is spoken of as being in any way moved by the apostle’s teaching, tho not the only one baptized, leads us to infer that

* “Church History,” vol. i., pp. 124, 125.

† “Words of Jesus,” vol. iii., p. 809.

those who were baptized with her were too young to be moved, but not to be baptized. Lydia was the only one on that occasion whose heart was opened by the Lord; yet other women were there,—were they baptized without this preparation? Only Lydia is mentioned. But why should stress be laid upon Lydia's heart-preparation only, unless that was important? The fact seems to be that Lydia's faith or preparation was, in the eyes of the apostle, a guaranty for her "household," and they were therefore baptized with her; and as no exception is made of any age, the youngest was baptized with the oldest, and if there were infants, they were baptized also. There is no doubt awakened in this instance, but, on the other hand, everything indicates that infants were in her household and were baptized. In the same chapter, we read that they baptized the Philippian jailer; "he, and all his, immediately." Here is a case in which "all his" seems to refer to those old enough to hear "the word" and "to rejoice." We find in this instance what we do not in the case of Lydia and her household. It is specifically mentioned that the word of the Lord was spoken to the jailer, "with all that were in this house," also that the jailer "rejoiced greatly with all his house, having believed God." We conclude from this that all those of Lydia's household were not old enough "to give heed unto the things which were spoken by Paul," or it would have been told us, as in the case of the jailer. The silence of Luke in the case of Lydia's household, and his careful mention of the conduct of all that were in the jailer's house, is significant; it is strong presumptive evidence that the rest of Lydia's household were too young to do as she did—that is, let the Lord open their hearts; but this was not the case with the jailer's family. We find additional evidence by way of contrasting these two households, both of which were baptized alike, tho in their

power to hear and believe they were not alike. From 1 Cor. i:16 we read: "And I baptized also the household of Stephanas." It will be fruitless to repeat in substance what has been so often written by those who have speculated *pro* and *con* respecting the baptism of these families.

One school contends that it is reasonable to suppose that some of the baptized were infants; the other as stoutly affirms that there was not sufficient proof to warrant such conclusion. All this is confusing because it can not be proven that there were infants in this household. Suppose there were none; suppose also that the baptism of infants is the great evil antipædobaptists claim it to be; then how misleading the word "household" becomes in this, and the case of Lydia's, for certainly nearly all households do have infants in them. The word household is so general in its meaning that it includes all ages in its scope. Such a term would never be used so recklessly by the sacred writers in connection with narrations of baptisms, if it were so evil to baptize infants, and if it had not been the custom to baptize them, or at least proper to do so. The fact that it was used is proof conclusive that baptism was performed by households, just as when a proselyte family was received into the Jewish church, at which time the child of tenderest age was baptized with all others in the family; if one was omitted he was not regarded as a proselyte. As previously stated, the Savior, in establishing His church, expected to build it up by proselyting from all people, and there is great reason to believe that He also designed that baptism should be the initiatory rite; and as it was necessary to baptize infants as well as adults among the Jews, so in the Christian Church. Peter's language at Pentecost (Acts ii:38) carries this idea with it and confirms this conclusion. When those who "were pricked in their hearts

said unto Peter, men and brethren what shall we do?" he replied: "Repent, and be baptized every one of you, in the name of the Lord Jesus Christ, for the remission of sins, and ye shall receive the gift of the Holy Ghost, for the promise is unto you and your children, and to all that are afar off." Does not the word *teknois* (children) include infants? It certainly does. If the promise includes infants, and carried with it the gift of the Holy Spirit, why should they not be baptized? As this broad view was taught at the commencement of the apostles' ministry, it must have been adhered to throughout, and wherever they went; for it distinctly stated that in addition to "they and their children," it was also "to all that are afar off, even as many as the Lord our God shall call,"—to Gentile as well as Jew. The view that infants and very small children are eligible to membership in the Redeemer's kingdom is proven beyond a doubt by the Savior's own teaching. When asked, "Who is the greatest in the kingdom of heaven?" it is said: "And Jesus called a little child unto him, and set him in the midst of them, and said, Verily I say unto you, Except ye be converted, and become as little children, ye shall not enter into the kingdom of heaven." Little children are therefore members of the kingdom of heaven. Now if they are already members of it, and if adults must first become like them to enter it, what, in all reason, is there that should exclude infants from baptism? The truth is, it is a matter of little concern whether the Scriptures contain specific instances of infant baptism or not; of little consequence whether many or few infants were baptized by the apostles or none at all. If such are already "of the kingdom of heaven," how can we either refuse to believe it, or defiantly say they are not, provided we have sufficient proof that the infant was regarded by them as a proper subject for baptism?

Paul admits that he did not make a practise of baptizing. Of all the Church at Corinth, he says he "baptized none but Crispus and Gaius," and even thanks God he did not, "lest any should say that I had baptized in my own name"; he did not remember that he had baptized any other except "the household of Stephanas" at Achaia. The reason he gives for this is: "For Christ sent me not to baptize, but to preach the gospel." It was the office of the deacons to baptize, rather than of the apostles.

There may have been other good reasons for not baptizing all infants, and better ones for not referring specifically to any instances as either infant or adult baptisms. One reason would be that the brevity of the narrative would not permit this; but a better one is that the minds of the people of those days did not require it: every one accepted, no one antagonized the practise. Both Christ's and the apostles' teachings are noted for silence upon rightly accepted truths of that day, and for fearless denunciation of those evils which were accepted as truths. The entire Sermon on the Mount is an assault, directly and indirectly, upon the abuses of Pharisaism. Christ's ministry throughout partook largely of the combative and invective. The apostle's epistles were, in part, of the same character. Now if infant baptism is the evil some proclaim it to be, would it not have received its share of this invective? But the fact is it received none whatever, and all that is said, together with the circumstances attending its earliest administration, are calculated to convince one that baptism was practised; it is difficult to believe that it was not.

Now in view of the foregoing, also of the declaration of the Savior's, that greater things than He had done His apostles should do; in view also of the fact that households were baptized and that there is not only no direct teaching excluding infants from baptism, but much that hints at the

practise, we are led to conclude that the teachings and practise of the apostles favored infant baptism.

But let it not be lost sight of that the real issue before us is not baptism *per se*, but an issue that lies back of it, namely: Is the infant a spiritual imbecile, or does it possess spiritual susceptibility? Can it be a subject of the Holy Spirit's saving operations or not? Can God enter into covenant with infants on earth? In order to establish these points we must establish infant baptism; surrender it, and all is conceded that the antipædobaptists claim; to wit, that the infant can not be saved as such because it can not hear the Word and believe.

This view of theirs, if sound, would necessarily work a serious change in the doctrine of infant salvation, and indeed upon the subject of salvation in general. It leaves the dead infant to pass into the eternal world without the saving grace of God, and, unless changed somehow after death, it must be lost.

For this reason let us gather all the light that is possible. Evidently, if the infant is not worthy of baptism, it must be because it is a spiritual imbecile. The proof already given should be sufficient, but we are not confined to this; the evidence from history is abundant. Let us therefore continue our search, even down to the present time.

CHAPTER III

EVIDENCE FROM THE FATHERS—JUSTIN MARTYR, IRENÆUS —TERTULLIAN AND HIS TIMES

It is now time that we, in tracing the history of this doctrine, should leave the Apostolic period, and discover, if possible, from records nearest it, what influence its teaching exerted upon the apostolic Fathers, and those next to them—the primitive Fathers. It is to be regretted that there is so little extant upon infant salvation at this early period; indeed, there is nothing at all upon the subject of infant baptism; no mention is made of it. But this is not to be wondered at, since even the writings of the apostles themselves are far from satisfactory respecting it. We shall have to grope our way through a period of more than one hundred years, only to find here and there a ray or two of light.

But why this lack of instruction on a subject so important? There are several ways to account for it. The most probable is that the subject was so well understood and so generally accepted that no questions were raised respecting it; no information was needed, no differences of opinion existed. It needed no advocate, hence no controversy. This withdrew the whole subject from the attention of the writers of those early days of the Church. Infant salvation could not have been a living question then, as it is now, else instead of only a ray or two of light we should have had many.

Still another reason is that there were Judaistic teachers,

the Gnostics and others, that "brought in damnable heresies," and these for the time being occupied the attention of the defenders of the truth, and all of them were upon subjects remote from infant salvation.

But there is yet another reason for this singular silence. The age was not a literary one, and little was written upon any of the doctrines of the Church. Mosheim says: "These apostolic Fathers, and the other writers who in the infancy of the Church employed their pens in the cause of Christianity, were neither remarkable for their learning nor for their eloquence; on the contrary, they express the most pious and admirable sentiments in the plainest and most illiterate style." * While, therefore, there was much preaching and teaching, there was little committed to writing upon uncontroverted subjects. It is needless, therefore, to look for an elaborate treatise upon baptism, or any of those subjects upon which all were agreed, infant baptism in particular.

In view of these facts, we are now prepared not to expect much from the apostolic and primitive Fathers. What have been suggested here as some of the probable reasons why more has not been written must not be construed as underestimating what they have written, or as in the least prejudicial to the writers themselves. The injunction of Paul to "lay hands suddenly upon no man," and also the warnings against false teachers, doubtless had borne their legitimate fruits, and as faithful a class of teachers as the times could afford were secured. Such men as Timothy, Titus, Barnabas, Polycarp, Ignatius of Antioch, Irenæus, bishop of Lyons, Justin Martyr, Papias, and Clement of Rome leave no doubt in our minds respecting this matter. The charge of Paul to Timothy, "The things which you have heard of us before many witnesses, the

* "Church History," vol. i., p. 41 (Harper Brothers, 1853).

same commit you to faithful men, who may teach others also," did not so soon lose its force. The fact, moreover, that several of the apostles lived till near the close of the first century, and St. John several years beyond it, must add weight and authority to the teachings of the second century.

The record of Polycarp, the disciple of St. John, will never lose its luster. Irenæus, Polycarp's pupil, was so devoted and competent that he earned for himself the distinguished title of "the mauler of heresies and false doctrines." The best evidence of the qualifications of the apostolic Fathers, however, lies in the fact that wonderful success attended their labors. The Church never made such rapid progress in its history as during the first two hundred years. When we consider its poverty and numbers, and the fearful odds against which its disciples had to contend, and if to this is added the persecutions it endured under Nero, Domitian, and Trajan, its success seems marvelous. Some time before his death Paul wrote to Philippi from Rome: "All the saints salute you, chiefly they that are of Cæsar's household." Its faithful ones had already begun to fill places of responsibility in the state. Tho there may have been lack of education and literary qualification among the primitive and apostolic Fathers, it is evident that these were more than counterbalanced by their extraordinary self-sacrifice and zeal. It is due the subject in hand that this much at least be said in their own defense, and also by way of inference in defense of the soundness of the doctrines they preached. Some Calvinistic writers of our times criticize the teachings of the early Fathers. A recent scholar says: "Less pure elements, however, entered almost inevitably into their thought. The ingrained externalism of both Jewish and heathen modes of conception, when brought into the

Church, wrought naturally toward the identification of the kingdom of Christ with the external Church, and of regeneration with baptism." *

The Calvinistic predilections of the author find in the writings of Justin Martyr and Irenæus doctrines that are fatal to that of election. How far the author's mind may have been influenced by these is not known. The objection is introduced here, however, to give the reader the benefit of it, and at the same time to explain it away as much as possible. Let us remember that Calvinism subordinates the sacraments, the preaching of the Word, and the Church itself to election. We are not saved by any of the so-called means of grace, but by the election of grace. The Church is the society of the elect of all ages and countries, both Jews and Gentiles. It is invisible, known only to God, who alone can know who are His. The election dominates everything. The means of grace are secondary; therefore the Church, the conservator of these means, is also secondary. Other Protestant communions, however, teach that the election is secondary; that the Church is a congregation of saints in which the Gospel is purely preached and the sacraments are rightly administered, whereby the Church and the Word are made the grand medium of salvation to a lost world. This system antagonizes the Calvinistic. The teaching of the apostolic and patristic Fathers (which makes even the salvation of infants depend upon the use of the means, and which conditions the election upon their use, and which further makes it secondary to the means) also antagonizes Calvinism.

It is true, however, that extravagances began to develop; but that they partook of either "Jewish" or "heathen modes of conception" does not follow, except so far as the Ebionites and Gnostics were concerned. Toward the close

* B. B. Warfield, D.D., "Infant Salvation," p. 6.

of the second century there were a few who inclined to external rites and historical traditions similar to legal Judaism, as was the case of Tertullian, who possessed also a Montanistic tendency; this, however, was by no means general in the Church. Justin Martyr was a converted heathen, and in early life had imbibed freely from the schools of heathen philosophy. But conversion seems to have wrought in him its legitimate fruit: that of entire hostility to everything that pertained to heathenism, with the most radical indorsement of Christianity, with all its internalism, to the exclusion of "externalism." Eusebius says that "he overshadowed all the great men who illuminated the second century by the splendor of his name." So a like hostility to Judaism and heathenism characterized the early Church as a rule. The Jewish and heathen tendencies were the exception. But this is a digression; let us return to the main subject.

Dr. Schaff, in alluding to the silence of the apostolic Fathers respecting infant baptism, says: "They make no mention of it, but their silence proves nothing, for they hardly touch upon baptism at all, except Hermas, and he declares it necessary to salvation even for the patriarchs in Hades; therefore we may well infer for children also." Hermas wrote before St. John wrote his gospel. It is evident, if baptism was regarded as essential for even the dead patriarchs before they could go to heaven, it was necessary for all the living also, and therefore for infants. The fact that such extreme views respecting the absolute necessity of baptism for salvation prevailed before the close of the first century, ought to leave no doubt upon the mind of the reader respecting the practise of baptizing infants at this time, and even during the times of the apostles, since St. John was yet alive.

Of the patriarchs Hermas writes: "They died in great

purity, being full of righteousness; only this seal [baptism] was wanting to them. It was necessary for them to come up by [or through] water that they might be at rest, for they could not otherwise enter into the kingdom of God. . . . When he [the patriarch] receives that seed, he is delivered from death and assigned to life.”*

It is true that this singular passage is presented in the form of a vision, and therefore just what its import is may not be clear. Yet Clemens Alexandrinus, who lived one hundred years after it was written, cites it as correct in doctrine. The passages from 1 Peter iii:19 and iv:6, which declare that Christ “preached unto the spirits in prison,” and that “the gospel was preached also to them that are dead,” were understood by them to teach this truth literally; and some also taught that one object of the Savior’s descent into Hades was to baptize the patriarchs so that they might enter heaven. Both Hermas and Alexandrinus taught that Christ and the apostles, after their death, preached to the dead. But what we are most surprised to learn is that so much stress was laid upon water baptism by these early writers. It throws much light upon the subject of infant salvation as understood at this obscure period, for if adults could not be saved without baptism, neither could infants that died.

The teachings of St. John seem to have received the preference in the early Church. He outlived the other apostles, and after the destruction of Jerusalem most of his time was spent in Ephesus, the most influential center of Eastern Christendom. Here, according to Eusebius and Theodore of Mopsuesta, he was living when his disciples prevailed upon him to write his gospel. He was, according to Jerome, in Asia when he complied with the request of the bishops of Asia and others to write more profoundly con-

* Wall, “Infant Baptism,” vol. i., pp. 25, 26.

cerning the divinity of Christ. Only John records the conversation of Christ with Nicodemus, which contains the words "Except a man be *born of water* and of the spirit, he can not see the Kingdom of God." This passage they interpreted as teaching that baptism must precede the new birth. They understood it to include infants as well as adults; they also accepted John's teaching respecting the Lord's Supper (John vi:50-56) as literally as possible. The sacraments were of prime importance. Calvinism is Pauline in character, and is not possible from the standpoint of John's gospel or epistles. True, in his epistle he speaks of "the elect lady," and her "elect sister," but in his writings the sacraments are of prime importance.

We are now prepared to understand why so much stress is laid upon water baptism, and why such teachers as Hermas must have insisted upon the baptism of infants. It was not from "Jewish or heathen modes of conception," but from John's gospel.

There is yet another passage from the writings of Hermas which is calculated to throw additional light: "Whosoever therefore shall continue as infants, without malice, shall be more honorable than all those of whom I have yet spoken. For all infants are valued by the Lord, and are esteemed first of all."*

This leaves no doubt in our mind as to the worthiness of infants for baptism, and because Hermas calls them infants, we know that he did not mean those over the infantile age.

We do not find in this very early Father anything bearing directly upon infant baptism; but this, instead of throwing any doubt upon the subject, is simply proof, as previously asserted, that no such question was then raised. Infants were no doubt baptized just as were adults, and no one doubted the propriety. We shall, however, quote sev-

* Wall, "Hermas, Pastor," etc., vol. i., p. 27.

eral passages from the writings of Justin from which we may draw inferences favorable to infant baptism.

"We also, who by Him have had access to God, have not received this carnal circumcision, but the spiritual circumcision, which Enoch and those like him observed. And we have received it *by baptism*, by the mercy of God, because we were sinners; and it is enjoined to all persons to receive it by the same way." *

If all received spiritual circumcision the same way (by baptism), then certainly infants were not denied it, since it was as necessary for their salvation as it was for adults.

In this same apology Justin says: "Several persons among us of sixty, and seventy years old, of both sexes, who were discipled to Christ in their childhood, do continue uncorrupted." Doubtless the word childhood is here used by Justin to assure those to whom he wrote that in making proselytes to the Christian faith it was safe to disciple them, even in childhood.

Irenæus frequently speaks of original sin as in itself damnatory in character, and only through Christ is there reconciliation and redemption. He also tells us that baptism is the means by which this redemption is conveyed to any one. He names it *lutrōsis* and *apolutrōsis*, redemption. †

In speaking of Christ he uses this language: "Therefore as He was a Master, He had also the age of a Master, not disdaining, nor going in a way above human nature, nor breaking in His own person the law which He had set for mankind, but sanctifying every several age, by the likeness it has to Him. For He came to save all persons by Himself; all, I mean, who by Him are regenerated [or baptized] unto God; infants, and little ones, and children, and youths, and elder persons. Therefore He went through

* Wall, "Dialog with Tryphone," etc., vol. i., p. 33.

† *Idem*, vol. i., p. 37.

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the several ages; for infants being made an infant, sanctifying infants. To little ones He was made a little one, sanctifying those of that age, and also giving them an example of godliness, justice, and dutifulness to youths. He was made a youth," etc.*

It is but fair to conclude that Irenæus intends to teach that baptism is the means through which these infants are regenerated. A recent authority says concerning this quotation: "This profound view of Irenæus involves an acknowledgment not only, as is universally granted, of the idea of infant baptism, but also of the practise of it; for in the mind of the ancient Church baptism and regeneration were intimately connected, and by Irenæus himself in another passage they are distinctly identified." †

With reference to this, an authority writes: "This can not be doubted by any who are at all acquainted with the books of those ages. . . . Irenæus himself uses it so in all other places of his book that I have ever observed; as, for instance, when he is producing testimonies of the Scripture concerning the Holy Spirit, he has this: 'And again when He gave His disciples the commission of regenerating unto God, He said unto them: "Go and teach all nations, baptizing them," etc.; where the commission of regenerating, plainly means the commission of baptizing.' " ‡

It is worthy of note that Justin Martyr and all the early Fathers used the word regenerate as synonymous with baptism; the words *renewed*, *sealed*, *enlightened*, and *initiated* are also used as interchangeable with baptism. The word *agiasthenai* (to be sanctified) is also used by Gregory Nazianzen three times for baptism in one oration; the same word is used in the same way by Cyprian, Tertullian,

* Wall, "Dialog with Tryphone," vol. i., pp. 37, 38.

† Schaff's "History of Christian Church," p. 402.

‡ Wall, "Dialog with Tryphone," vol. i., p. 38.

Augustine, Hierom, Paulinas, Pelagius, and the Fathers generally, and Paul in 1 Cor. vi:11 employs the word in the same sense: "And such were some of you, but now ye are washed, but ye are *sanctified*," etc. See also Ephes. v:26: "That he might *sanctify*, and cleanse it [the church] with the washing of water, by the word."

Dr. Schaff says that "the early Fathers could not conceive of regeneration without baptism."

Dr. Stanley, dean of Westminster, is still more emphatic. He says: "In the writings of the later Fathers, there is no doubt that the word we translate *regeneration* is used *exclusively* for baptism. But it is equally certain that in the earlier Fathers it is used for *repentance*, or, as we should now say, *conversion*."*

It is, however, only in an objective and not a subjective sense that the early Fathers used the term *sanctification*, instead of baptism, in the case of infants. Neander, in his "History of Christian Dogmatics," says: "Irenæus merely gives to infants an objective sanctification."† It was only objective because the infant could not actively believe.

As this fact is important, the view of another authority will not be deemed superfluous. Wall, in his "History of Infant Baptism," says: "When Irenæus does here speak of infants regenerated, it is plain enough of itself that they are not capable of regeneration in any other sense of the word than as it signifies baptism; I mean the outward act of baptism, accompanied with that grace, or mercy of God whereby He admits them into covenant, tho without any sense of theirs."

Hagenbach says in reference to this same quotation from Irenæus: "It expresses the beautiful idea that Jesus was Redeemer in every stage of life, and for every stage of life."‡

* "Christian Institutes," p. 10.

† Vol. i., p. 230.

‡ "History of Doctrine," vol. i., p. 282.

Irenæus intends to teach that the whole life of Christ in its respective stages was meritorious, that even His infancy bore fruit for infants, and that it was essential for this specific purpose: "For infants being made an infant sanctifying infants." In this manner a victory was obtained over depravity, so that through baptism He could, notwithstanding their infancy and feebleness, become a sanctifying power to them.

This profound view has been accepted as sound by some of the ablest writers the Church has produced. There is little doubt but that it bore a considerable share in the thought of Anselm, as he in the twelfth century developed the doctrine of the atonement; we also find traces of it in Luther's writings. Stier makes mention of it with approval, as does also Dr. Schaff, and many others.

The potent inquiry here arises: What views did the patristic Fathers hold respecting the fate of unbaptized and heathen infants at death? There is a painful silence in their utterances respecting all such. A recent author says: "The doctrine of infant damnation was unknown to the early Church."* It is doubtful whether this conclusion is entirely correct, for it is evident that even at this time the trend of belief was decidedly toward the damnation of all unbaptized infants. Their silence suggests uncertainty as a prime factor, coupled with fear that all such infants were lost. This is proven by the fact that there was but one conclusion—finally arrived at—that of their damnation. The fact that they knew of no regeneration without baptism is strong proof that we must interpret their silence as leaning strongly, tho with some reservation perhaps, to a belief in the damnation of unbaptized infants after death.

Tertullian, born sixty years after Irenæus, taught that it was so necessary to baptize infants, that rather than let

* Herzog's "Cyclopedia" on "Infant Salvation."

them die without, if the services of a minister could not be secured, a layman should administer the baptism.

Cyprian, a disciple of Tertullian, along with sixty-five other bishops of North Africa, gave it as their conviction that no time should be lost, but infants should be baptized as soon as possible.

Add to this testimony the fact that a magical influence or power had even before this become associated with baptism, and the proof becomes more positive. Irenæus has been charged by some writers with originating that tendency which regarded the outward ordinances necessary; he has also been styled "the faithful bearer of Joannean tradition." Everything points to but one conclusion: that grave fears were entertained even in his day for those infants who were left to die without baptism.

For these reasons there seems to be no good ground for the statement that "the doctrine of infant damnation was unknown to the early Church," but rather that Irenæus and his contemporaries inclined to the belief that unbaptized infants that died were lost.

The same writer in this article gives the following as his reason for concluding that infant damnation was unknown at this time: "Because baptism was commonly postponed to Easter week proves that it even was not considered any loss to the child to die unbaptized."

It certainly proves nothing of the kind, for if the infant was likely to die before Easter week, no doubt it was baptized. The extreme views entertained concerning this rite, at this time, forbid the thought that they considered it no loss to the child to die without it. There are other ways of accounting for this postponement of baptism till Easter besides the one suggested by this writer. About this time Tertullian advised that baptism should be deferred until late in life, not because he deemed it useless, but the re-

verse; so important did he regard it that rather than let the infant die without, a layman should baptize it. Yet a hasty inference would be that Tertullian laid little stress upon baptism because he deferred it to old age. There is also direct proof that this practise of deferring baptism till Easter was regarded as dangerous. Gregory Nazianzen, in the fourth century, reprov'd those who delayed it until Epiphany, or Easter, or Whitsuntide: "What will come of this [delay of baptism]?" he says. "The end of your life will come, on a sudden, in a day and hour that you think not of." *

This indicates the view entertained upon this subject at the time; and from other testimony, both before and after it, we may be assured the conclusion of the writer quoted is not correct.

The very fact that they brought infants at Easter to be baptized is enough to show that it was regarded as a loss for the child to die unbaptized. From these and many other reasons one is forced to believe that the writer in "Herzog's Encyclopedia" is in error on this subject. Irenæus and his contemporaries evidently entertained little hope for the salvation of those infants who died without baptism.

Tertullian is the first Latin writer whose works have come down to us. He wrote about one hundred years after St. John died, was made a presbyter of the Church, at Carthage, about A.D. 192. According to Jerome, "he was a man of eager and violent temper." A writer of recent date describes him as "a gloomy, fiery character, who gained for Christianity out of the Punic Latin a literature in which animated rhetoric, a wild imagination, a gross sensuous perception of the ideal, profound feeling, and a juridical understanding struggled with each other." †

* Wall, "History of Infant Baptism," vol. i., p. 89.

† Hagenbach, "History of Christian Doctrine," p. 89.

As might be expected in one possessing such a temperament, eccentricities of some sort would exhibit themselves in his teaching. He is not regarded as a safe authority in doctrine, because while writing much against heresy he became a heretic himself, a Montanist. He also originated the singular view that baptism was so efficacious that it alone could secure the pardon of previous sin; and as it could not be repeated, therefore sin committed after baptism, except venial sin, was unpardonable. There were also seven mortal sins from which nothing but baptism or martyrdom could cleanse the soul; in the latter event, the cleansing was effected by the victim's baptism in his own blood. Because of the danger of falling after baptism into one or more of these seven sins, he taught that infant baptism should not be practised except it was certain that the infant was about to die. "Why," he asks, "should the age of innocence be in haste to obtain the remission of sins?" He also says: "Unmarried persons ought to be kept off who are likely to come into temptation until they marry or be confirmed in conscience. They that understand the weight of baptism will rather dread the receiving it than the postponement of it."* There is no doubt that this view of Tertullian's exercised considerable influence, for traces of it are to be found in the teachings and practise of the Church for several centuries.

Dr. Schaff says: "Considerable freedom prevailed in respect to infant baptism even in the Nicene and post-Nicene ages." He cites as proof the instances of Gregory of Nazianzen, St. Chrysostom, and St. Augustine, who, tho they had mothers of exemplary piety, were not baptized before early manhood. He also says Gregory of Nazianzen gives us the advice to put off the baptism of children, when there

*Tertullian's "Ecclesiastical History," per John, Bishop of Bristol.

is no danger of death, to their third year. All this may be traced directly to Tertullian.

Constantine the Great purposely delayed his baptism till on his death-bed, for the reasons assigned by Tertullian. Late in life he prepared to make war against Persia, but before setting out on the expedition a fatal malady suddenly seized him, from which he survived but a few days. While upon his death-bed the Arian bishop of Nicomedia baptized him. Such seems to have been his confidence in the power of baptism to wash away sin that he is said to have expressed himself happy at the prospect of his departure, and fully assured of eternal life. This "considerable freedom" was due to Tertullian's singular teachings respecting the delay of baptism. It is evident, however, that this so-called freedom was not due to the belief that the infant was a spiritual imbecile, but to the view that if it lived to responsible age it would be liable to fall into mortal sin after baptism, and would have no means left for securing forgiveness.

That expression, "Why does that innocent age [infancy] make such haste [to be baptized]?" indicates very clearly that the baptism of infants was commonly practised in Tertullian's day. This, taken with the usage of sponsors—a custom that he bears witness to—establishes this fact beyond dispute.

Tertullian is not sufficiently clear in his views respecting original sin; but this is not surprising, as the whole subject was yet comparatively new. It required the Pelagian controversy, and a mind with the grasp of Augustine's, to develop and elucidate it. So far as one can comprehend Tertullian's views, he taught that the soul was propagated with the body; sin also was propagated with it as one of its characteristics. Adam's fall transmitted condemnation to the whole human race which became infected through him.

The fall involved mankind also in the punishment hereafter. The entire man, soul as well as body, was sinful. In this he antagonized the Alexandrine school, and the later one at Antioch also. These, with Origen and Chrysostom at their respective heads, taught that the spirit was not involved in the fall, but remained pure; the body only was corrupted, and at death the unbaptized infant went to a middle state.

Tertullian, on the other hand, taught that even infants were subject to condemnation by the fall, and that they must be born again of water and of the spirit. This view has been adopted, with some exceptions, by the Latin or Western wing of the Church, and in modified forms has come down to us and pervades modern Protestantism.

It is true, however, that original sin was not emphasized by Tertullian as it was by Augustine, Luther, and Calvin. In order that the reader may know how he expressed himself respecting this important doctrine, it will be proper to give a quotation from his works:

"Besides the evil," he says, "which the soul contracts, from the intervention of the wicked spirit, there is an antecedent, and in a certain sense natural evil, arising from its corrupt origin. For as we have already observed, the corruption of our nature is *another nature*, having its proper god and father, namely, the author of that corruption. Still there is a portion of good in the soul; of that original, divine, and genuine good which is its proper nature. For that which is derived from God is rather obscured than extinguished. It may be obscured because it is not God, but it can not be extinguished because it emanates from God. Men differ widely in their moral characters, yet the souls of all form but one genus. In the worst there is something good; in the best there is something bad. . . .

As no soul is without sin, neither is any without the seeds of good.”*

Concerning the ultimate effect of this depravity upon the soul, Tertullian is perfectly clear. “Whereas,” he says, “it is an acknowledged rule that none can be saved without baptism: grounded especially on that sentence of our Lord, ‘Unless one be born of water he can not be saved,’ ”—in view of the fact that there is no forgiveness, no salvation without baptism, in cases of necessity he urges that laymen baptize. “Let it suffice that those [laymen] make use of this power [baptism]. For then the adventuring to help is well taken, when the condition of a person in danger forces one to it; he that shall neglect at such a time to do what he lawfully may, will be guilty of the person’s perdition.”†

Tertullian is silent upon the damnation of infants who failed of baptism, but so is every writer who preceded as well as those who immediately followed him. No general or provincial council had ventured to promulgate any view upon the subject except the fifth provincial council of Carthage, A.D. 254. Then it was the milder view only, that “they hoped that among the many mansions of heaven there might still be found even for those infants who died unbaptized some place of shelter.”

Evidently Tertullian’s views concerning depravity and the necessity of baptism led him to regard the state of the unbaptized infant as one of extreme peril, even tho he did not venture to declare it openly. The fact that there could be no salvation without baptism, coupled with his firm belief that mortal sins committed after baptism could not be forgiven, shows how strongly the magical power of baptism had

*Tertullian against Marcion, “Ecclesiastical History,” John, Bishop of Bristol, pp. 161, 162.

†Wall, “History of Infant salvation,” vol. i., pp. 43, 44.

fastened itself upon the Church. That which began to bud soon after the close of the first century was in full bloom now, and in due time it was to drop as ripe fruit into the lap of the Church. Like a magic charm baptism then saved all who received it, with or without their consent, or without regard to the intention of the one who administered it; as, for instance, in the case of children, or actors performing the rite with no serious intention, it was the belief that such baptism washed away all sin.*

During the third and fourth centuries, the belief that the water at baptism was changed into the blood of Christ was as firmly fixed as the belief in the change of the wine in the Eucharist. It was not the effect of divine grace upon the soul which those fathers built their hopes of salvation upon, but upon the magical effect of the water upon the body. While these magical notions did not reach their climax during the lifetime of Tertullian, they were, nevertheless, well advanced before he died. It is in place here to state that distinct traces of this magical power are to be found still in the doctrine of the Roman and Greek churches. The *opus operatum* as held by them is the same with some modifications. It has been found exceedingly difficult to extricate the Church from this magical belief in baptism. Even tho Protestant doctrine repudiates it, yet it exists unsuspected often in the minds of parents who present their children for baptism. It is very insidious, and has even found its way into other Protestant doctrines and practise. It is difficult to determine the extent of it in the Lord's Supper, the doctrine of election, and in the efficacy of the word, of prayers, and even of faith itself. Happy indeed is he who can escape it altogether. We may reject the *opus operatum* as a doctrine, and yet in spirit be in full possession of it. It may flatter our vanity to reject it, but it has

* See Stanley's "Christian Institutes," p. 14.

a thousand ways to conceal its identity and still be present and active.

Aside from this magical effect of baptism upon the subject, we find it in another form in Tertullian's teaching, where he sees in it the principal if not the only means of securing pardon for the seven mortal sins. This too has taken hold upon the Roman Church; its present sacrament of penance is a result of it. The difficulty of securing pardon from mortal sin after baptism suggested the necessity of self-imposed exercises, such as confession, prayer, almsgiving, fasting, abstinence, self-flagellation, and the repeating of a certain number of Ave Marias, Pater Nosters, and Credos. It is probable that Cyprian—the pupil of Tertullian—was the first to suggest that self-imposed exercises were necessary to secure pardon for mortal sin committed after baptism. After this, the sacrament of penance became prominent in the Latin wing of the Church.

But that which most concerns us is the status of the doctrine of infant salvation at this time. Tertullian developed it more fully than his predecessors. He did not hesitate to grapple with the doctrine of original sin and its consequences, and he finds in baptism alone the only sure hope for the dying infant. The fact that the infant possesses spiritual susceptibility is fully recognized by him, so that without the power to believe or hear the word it may become a subject of saving grace. But baptism only is necessary to secure this grace. From the trend of the teaching in the Church until this time, we could expect nothing less than such a conclusion. It had been favorable from the first, tho apparently non-committal.

Tho the doctrine of depravity was not yet clearly defined, its tendency even in the infant was toward its final condemnation. The logical conclusion was that if not baptized, the infant would be lost. But it requires more than a mere

logical conclusion to produce at once profound conviction on doctrines so momentous as those which affect the soul's eternal salvation, and when the subject is more or less shrouded in doubt and mystery, conscientious minds are extremely cautious. But logical conclusions long held and defended ripen finally into conviction; they even secure for themselves the indorsement of councils, and are then sanctioned as sound doctrine. In time they become historical and traditional; if wrong, generations will probably come and go before the error is discovered and exposed. Even then there is danger that the exact truth will not be clearly discerned at first, for often the mind of the reformer assumes too radical a bent, so that the true medium is not found until afterward, when a conservative judgment is formed. It is thus with the doctrine of infant salvation. The trend in its development was all in one direction; infant baptism was practised; depravity and its consequences were being studied, but as yet the mind of the Church was not prepared to declare that the souls of infants that died without baptism would be lost, and it had grave apprehensions, and was gradually ripening into the conviction that damnation awaited all such. In due time it openly declared this to be its belief.

This doctrine, once established, continued to hold sway for more than one thousand years. Ulrich Zwingli then ventured to teach that all infants—"Jew, Gentile, barbarian, Scythian, bond and free"—all would be saved, whether baptized or not. The grounds upon which he based this belief are not generally regarded as correct, yet to-day there are few Protestants, if any, who do not, upon one ground or another, believe that all dead infants are saved.

CHAPTER IV

ORIGEN AND THE ALEXANDRIAN SCHOOL OF THEOLOGIANs —THE SCHOOL AT ANTIOCH—CHRYSOSTOM—CYPRIAN

FOR the present let us turn from the teaching of the Latin, or Western theologians, to the Eastern. The theology of the Eastern Church originated chiefly in the school at Alexandria in Egypt; Origen and Clement were its founders. From the first, Origen was its controlling genius. In treating upon any vital subject in theology during the times of the patristic Fathers, it is impossible to ignore him; he was born A.D. 183, only twenty-three years after Tertullian. His father and grandfather had accepted the Christian faith. He, with Clement, subdivided man into body, soul, and spirit—three distinct parts. The body was the material part; the soul, the principle of animal life, together with the sensuous appetites and passions, which relate to the physical world; and spirit was the rational and spiritual principle, including the will and the moral affections. This spirit was preexistent, and therefore free from the pollutions of the body. Original sin had no power over it, but was confined to the first two. The spirit having descended from the realm of pure spirits into the body, could not be evil; it was isolated from the body and able to control it; tho the evil was “all around, it was not in it.”

It will be observed that according to this theory, even if the infant should die without baptism, its immortal

nature could not be condemned, since original sin had not polluted it, being confined in infancy only to the body and soul; these perished at death, and with them original sin also. In order that the spirit should become sinful, it was necessary for the infant to live and develop into the responsible state, old enough to submit the spirit to the control of evil. This trichotomy of Origen was rejected by Tertullian and ignored by Augustine, but was accepted by Luther and others in the Lutheran Church, notably by Delitzsch in his system of "Biblical Psychology." But Origen's view, that the spirit is not involved in the fall from infancy, is rejected by them.

It was Origen's view that actual sin only could damn the infant. Calvin, speaking of this opinion of the Fathers of this period, said that "Nothing was more remote from natural reason than that all should be criminated on account of the guilt of one, and thus his sin become common." In reference to the same, Petavius wrote: "The Fathers before the rise of Pelagius did very often think and write more inaccurately of original sin and free will than it became great doctors of the Church." *

With these facts before us, the reader will be prepared to understand the positive declarations of Origen respecting original sin as referring to its evil not upon the infant, but upon the adult; therefore, while he favors infant baptism, it is not that the infant if it die should be saved thereby, but that if it should become a man, it would be preserved from the evil influence of original sin. This is what he says respecting it: "Hear David speaking, 'I was conceived in iniquity, and in sin did my mother bring me forth,' showing that every soul that is born in the flesh is polluted with the filth of sin and iniquity, and that none is clear from the pollution, tho his life be but the length

* Shedd's "History of Christian Doctrine," vol. ii., pp. 30, 31.

of one day. And also in the law it is commanded that a pair of turtle doves, or two young pigeons, of which one is for a sin-offering, the other for a burnt-offering. For what sin is this one pigeon offered? Can the child that is new-born have committed any sin? It has even then sin, for which the sacrifice is commanded to be offered; from which even he whose life is but one day is desired to be free. For this also it was, that the Church had from the apostles a tradition to give baptism even to infants. For they to whom the divine mysteries were committed knew that there is in all persons the natural pollution of sin, which must be done away with by water and the spirit; by reason of which the body itself is also called the body of sin.”*

In view of the fact that the spirit of the infant would not perish if it died without baptism, Origen would not have it baptized to save its soul, but to cleanse it from original sin, which later in life would corrupt it; to counteract this, baptism was necessary, as Origen himself says, “to take away the native pollution of *the body*,” in order to fit the infant to live rather than to die. This view also recognizes susceptibility in the infant. In all Origen’s writings there is not a word which can be construed to teach that the infant is a spiritual imbecile.

These views of Origen and Clement underwent some change afterward among the Greek theologians; such writers as Athanasius, Basil, Gregory Nazianzen, Gregory Nyssa, Cyril of Jerusalem, and Cyril of Alexandria denied, the preexistence of the spirit. The view that it was created, was adopted in its stead; also that it, with the body, shared the consequences of the fall. Original sin, while it did not consign the unbaptized infant to hell, did prevent its entrance into heaven. Cyril of Jerusalem admits that the sentence of death passes upon infants, “not as a penalty,

* Comment in Epistles and Romans, lib. v.

but for other reasons." He lays the foundation for that distinction between the two states of the lost which was afterward made by Peter Lombard, who defined the one as "*pœna damni*," and the other "*pœna sensus*." The one involved simply the loss of heaven, the other suffered that and torment besides. Cyril would have us understand that the infant suffered simply the loss of heaven.

Gregory Nazianzen, one of the greatest of the Greek Fathers, was born a century and a quarter after Origen. He adopted the modified views of the school at Alexandria upon the doctrine of original sin. In an oration upon baptism, he calls it "the gift," "the grace," "washing," "anointing," "the laver of regeneration," "the amending of our make," and "the seal." Upon this particular subject he no doubt had been influenced somewhat by Tertullian, for he did advise that the baptism of infants should be delayed till "three years, or thereabout, when they are capable to hear and answer some of the holy words, and tho they do not perfectly understand them, yet you then sanctify them in soul and body with the great sacrament of initiation; . . . it is by all means advisable that they be secured by the laver of baptism."

In another place in the oration above quoted Nazianzen uses this language: "Hast thou an infant child? let not wickedness have the advantage of time; let him be sanctified from his infancy; let him be dedicated from his cradle to the spirit; then as a faint-hearted mother, and of little faith, art thou afraid of giving him the seal because of the weakness of nature?" He urges the baptism of infants lest they die suddenly without receiving it. He asks: "Shall we baptize them [infants], too? Yes, by all means, if any danger make it requisite, for it is better that they be sanctified without their own sense of it, than that they should die unsealed and uninitiated." If infants should die "un-

sealed and uninitiated," Gregory does not believe that they will be lost in hell; on the other hand, he says: "Because of their infancy, they have no opportunity to obtain the gift; . . . this sort will neither be glorified nor punished by the just Judge, because they are without the 'seal' not through their own wickedness." This was the general belief of the Greek Church. This introduces a new feature into the subject of infant salvation, the theory of the middle state. Respecting spiritual susceptibility in infants, the Alexandrian school from Origen to Gregory does not leave us in doubt; it believed the infant to be a fit subject for baptism.

The great Chrysostom is the best representative of the school at Antioch. He does not differ materially from Origen concerning the transmission of Adam's nature, whose sin could bring upon his descendants only physical death, but not spiritual death; a vitiated body and soul with the senses, but not a sinful will. He says: "It is not unbecom-
ing that from that man who sinned, and thereby became mortal, there should be generated those who should also sin, and thereby become mortal; but that by a single act of disobedience, another being is made a sinner, what reason is there in this? No one owes anything to justice until he first becomes a sinner for himself." *

To Chrysostom, the words "Many were made sinners" meant simply liability to suffer and to die. Original sin had not yet been developed as a doctrine, and the Greek Fathers who lived before the days of Augustine regarded the fall chiefly as a physical evil; its moral effects were small.

While Chrysostom sympathized with this mild view of depravity, he did not on that account undervalue the means

* Shedd, "History of Christian Doctrine," vol. ii., p. 40 ("Commentary Romans v.")

of grace, even for infants. No one exceeds him in the esteem of baptism; he claims ten distinct blessings to the infant as the result of it. He writes as follows: "They [the baptized] are not only free, but saints; not saints only, but justified; and not only justified, but sons; and not only sons, but heirs; not heirs only, but brothers of Christ; not only His brethren, but His heirs; not His heirs only, but members of Him; not members only, but His temple; and not His temple only, but organs of His spirit." As if this were not sufficient he then adds: "You see how many are the benefits of baptism, and yet some think that the heavenly grace consists only in the forgiveness of sins; but I have reckoned up ten advantages of it. For this cause we baptize infants also, tho they are not defiled with sin, that there may be superadded to them saintship, righteousness, adoption, inheritance, a brotherhood with Christ, and to be made members of Him."* The fact that all these blessings are designated so particularly, and claimed so positively, proves clearly that the importance of baptism was generally recognized, and that infants were regarded as capable of receiving great blessing through it.

Another writer of distinction, Isidorus Pelusiota—said to have been a pupil of Chrysostom—after saying that not only is the natural pollution washed away in the baptism of the infant, also adds, "that a great many other graces, far transcending our nature, are thereby given," and then names each of them as Chrysostom did. Theodoret of Antioch entertained similar views of baptism. He writes: "The sacrament [baptism] promises not this only, but greater and higher things; for it is a pledge of future blessings, a type of the resurrection, a communication of Christ's passion."

This extravagance in praise of some particular sacrament

* "Chrysostom Contra Julianum," per Wall, vol. i., p. 120.

or doctrine is not peculiar to the Antiochian school of theologians, nor to any one period of the Church; it has been common in every period of her history. Some particular doctrine having received an inordinate share of attention, as a consequence grew in importance until exaggerated views of it possessed the mind. Other doctrines of equal or even greater value usually suffer in such hands, because studied less; indeed, even the favorite one also suffers in the end, for all excess must react upon the subject of it sooner or later. For instance, baptism would suffer because it would be robbed of sufficient support from its concomitant or associated doctrines; they are compromised, that it may receive its excess. The necessary result is injury to all. Baptism is expected to do more than its share in imparting grace, while other sacraments necessary to the support of grace are neglected. Is not this true of the Lord's Supper as accepted by the Catholic Church? Is there not in it a tendency to drop away from the spiritual, and to employ the senses and the imagination too much, in order to make the service grand and imposing, and to lose the spiritual in the formal? An extravagant estimate of the Eucharist has magnified everything associated with it into the magical and marvelous. "The bread and wine are substantially changed into the body and blood of Christ by the consecration or blessing of the priest (as by magic), so that nothing remains except the original form, color, smell, and taste."

"The consecrated element remains a true sacrament even after the sacramental act, without regard as to whether it is used or not."

"The consecrated wafer may and shall be worshiped by believers."

"For a blessed reception of the Lord's Supper, nothing is necessary except that we offer no wilful resistance."
(Faith is not essential.)

“Since the blood may not be separated from the body, therefore whoever receives the body, at the same time receives the blood; the Lord’s Supper under one form—the wafer—is sufficient for salvation. Therefore the cup is withdrawn from the laity. In the Lord’s Supper, the Lord is ever offered up anew in a bloodless manner for the forgiveness of sins, by the hands of the priests (sacrifice of the mass).” *

This abuse of the Eucharist must react. The sacrament of baptism has been overestimated in our day; the very mode of it has become of supreme importance. In the Greek Church it is essential to immerse three times; some immerse backward and others forward. Modes and forms are exaggerated. There are also some who rely so exclusively on revivals that other important measures and means have been neglected. Other measures in comparison are simply what ballast is to the ship—cheap merchandise—and can serve only a secondary purpose. The consequence is that both revivals and the Church suffer. The truth is, the doctrines, the sacraments, and the service are all one consistent whole. They are not all sacrament, nor all doctrine, nor all form. If one be exaggerated, it must be at the expense of all the rest.

After this digression, let us return to the Eastern Church before dismissing it, and epitomize its doctrines relating to infant salvation. Origen believed in the preexistence of the soul and denied original sin. The infant soul at death returned to the Father, but baptism was necessary to destroy natural pollution, which if left alone would at maturity corrupt the will. The later Alexandrian and Antiochian schools modified this view somewhat. The soul was not preexistent, but propagated like the body, so that the will was somewhat involved in the effects of the fall of Adam,

*“G. Graul, D.D., “Distinctive Doctrines,” p. 38.

and the unbaptized infant at death could not ascend to heaven, but was consigned to a middle state. This modified view "became the type," says Dr. Shedd, "of doctrine for the Eastern Church, and under new forms and new names has perpetuated itself down to the present." *

As Origen's views of original sin pervaded the Eastern, so did Tertullian's the Western Church. His maxim, "The propagation of the soul implies the propagation of sin," was accepted as sound. Original sin involved the spiritual nature, as well as the physical, so that neither escaped.

The Western Church knew nothing of a middle state, and taught that only baptism could with certainty save the dead infant from veritable damnation. True, at first it did not openly teach this as truth, but the declarations respecting the absolute necessity of baptism will admit of no other inference; and in due time infant damnation was proclaimed as one of the doctrines of the Latin Church.

After Tertullian, Cyprian became the most prominent bishop of the Western Church. This celebrated martyr and teacher was born about the year 220. He was a disciple of Tertullian, and became the leader of the Western Church in Northern Africa. While we shall quote from a letter which was sanctioned by sixty-six other bishops, the authorship of it has been attributed to Cyprian by both Hierom and Augustine. This letter contains his views upon the subject of infant salvation. It was called forth in this way: Fidus, a bishop from the country, presented two cases of inquiry to a provincial council of bishops, held in Carthage A.D. 253. Over this council Cyprian presided. One of these inquiries was as follows: "Was it proper to baptize an infant before it is eight days old, if need required?" The inquiry was addressed "to Cyprian and the rest of the bishops at the council." The answer they gave

* "History of Doctrine," vol. ii., p. 41.

is as follows: "As to the case of infants: Whereas you judge that they must not be baptized within two or three days after they are born: and that the rule of circumcision is to be observed, so that none should be baptized and sanctified before the eighth day after he is born, we were all in our assembly of the contrary opinion. For as for what you thought fitting to be done, there was not one that was of your mind, but all of us, on the contrary, judged that the grace and mercy of God is to be denied to no person that is born. For whereas our Lord in His Gospel says: 'The son of man came not to destroy men's souls [or lives] but to save them'; as far as lies in us, no soul, if possible, is to be lost. . . . So that we judge that no person is to be hindered from obtaining the grace by the law that is now appointed: and that the spiritual circumcision ought not to be restrained by the circumcision that was according to the flesh, but that all are to be admitted to the grace of Christ."*

The above lengthy extract will serve to show that this council did not regard the infant as a spiritual imbecile. In fact it believed in the magical effect of baptism upon infants; for it had power to cut out natural corruption, and afterward prevent the certain fall of such into sin through temptation; it had therefore both an immediate and a remote effect. These bishops evidently must also have regarded the unbaptized infant's condition as a perilous one, or why the imperative need of such haste in baptizing it? One is struck with their unanimity upon this subject. The letter states that not one of the sixty-six bishops was of the opinion that baptism should be delayed until the child was eight days old.

It appears from facts furnished that even the heretical sects practised infant baptism at this time also; for some of those baptized in infancy by the Donatists, after they

* Wall, "History of Infant Baptism," vol. i., pp. 63, 64.

arrived at proper age, sought membership in the orthodox Church. Cyprian held that it was mockery to be baptized by such. He maintained that an unholy priest could not consecrate the water, because he had not the Holy Spirit; hence he, as Tertullian before him, rebaptized all who came to the Catholic Church from heretical sects. He regarded the Catholic Church as the sole repository of divine grace. Dr. Schaff says: "There could be no forgiveness of sins, no regeneration or communication of the Spirit, no salvation out of her bosom. He [Cyprian] regards her bishops as the sole conservers of the Holy Spirit, which was sent through Christ to the apostles, and from these to the bishops, and so it is transmitted in unbroken succession." * Such dogmatic teaching could be satisfied with nothing less than the rebaptism of all not baptized by its own school. Several councils, afterward held at Carthage, sanctioned it.

The fact that they rebaptized all such, and the reasons given for doing so, afford sufficient proof that even the heretical sects practised infant baptism. There is another fact that affords indirect proof of the same. The heretical sects and the Catholics had frequent controversies upon doctrines about which they disagreed, but there was no discussion about infant baptism; therefore we can safely conclude that upon it they were agreed. Even the heretics regarded infants as capable of receiving spiritual blessing.

In view of the interminable discussions upon this subject of baptism twelve hundred years after this, it seems strange that through all these preceding years we discover such harmony. Grotius, tho writing as late as the seventeenth century, tries to prove that infant baptism was not, in the time of Cyprian, generally held to be necessary; and the reason he gives for this is that it was never mentioned previous to the council held at Carthage in the year A.D.

* "Creeds of Christendom," vol. i., p. 405.

418. Yet this letter just quoted was penned by Cyprian at a provincial council in Carthage, one hundred and sixty-five years before the one Grotius refers to. True, it was not an ecumenical council, such as the one was to which Grotius refers, but provincial, composed of the bishops from neighboring districts only, and it convened every six months. Such councils were not clothed with authority, and therefore did not record their decrees, as was the custom when larger general councils met, deliberated, and decreed. The Council of A.D. 418, to which Grotius refers, was much larger. Augustine, who was present with two hundred others, styled it "The Council of Africa." Its decrees against Pelagianism were authoritative and received the general approval of the Church.

But the truth is, no document by any ecumenical council was more generally accepted than this one of Cyprian's, either north of the Mediterranean or south of it.

Grotius seems to have possessed as much respect for the decrees of general councils as the Romanists themselves; yet, in fact, he would not in this case accept the rule which Augustine adopted, which in substance is: that whatever the entire Church practises, tho it was never instituted by councils, but has always been in use, is with very good reason to be accepted as settled by the authority of the apostles. Augustine says: "This rule applies to infant baptism." This hypercritical spirit in Grotius is in this case unwarranted. We have every reason to believe that infant baptism was generally practised in this century.

"The position which Cyprian maintained at Carthage, that of ignoring baptism administered by heretics, was not generally regarded as correct. Stephen I., Pope at Rome about this time, adhered to the opposite view. He said that every baptism performed in the name of Jesus carries with it regenerating and sanctifying influence. A dispute between

Cyprian and Stephen was the result. Those who accepted the latter's teaching affirmed that the virtue of this sacrament was not derived from the character of the priest who administered it, nor did it depend upon the one who received it, but upon the virtue of the sacrament itself. All that was necessary was to baptize in the name of the Trinity, or even of Christ alone. According to Cyprian, the magical effect of baptism depended upon the sacerdotal consecration of the water; but the Pope and his adherents supposed the same effect could be secured, irrespective of the priest, by the objective virtue of the sacrament alone. In either case the effect of the baptism was magical.

More than one hundred years after this letter to Fidus was written, it was referred to, and parts of it quoted by, Augustine, and always with approval and favorable comment. In his Epistle XXVIII. to St. Jerome, he, in criticizing those who taught that the body of the infant suffered only for original sin, says among other things: "Blessed Cyprian not making any new decree, but expressing *the firm faith of the Church*, in refuting those that thought a child must not be baptized before the eighth day, said not that no flesh, but that no soul must be lost."

In his writings against the views of Pelagius, he quotes from this same letter three times. He also told Marcellinus, a nobleman, to whom he wrote, to consult this epistle of Cyprian and then quoted two lengthy paragraphs from it.

Toward the close of a sermon which Augustine preached in Carthage against Pelagianism, he said: "Holy Cyprian was asked whether an infant might be baptized before the eighth day, because in the old law it was not lawful to circumcize but on the eighth day. . . . St. Cyprian said: 'So that we judge that no person is to be hindered from obtaining the grace, because they are not his own, but others' sins that are forgiven him; see how he, making no doubt

of this matter [original sin], solves that of which there was doubt.' " *

St. Jerome, a contemporary of Augustine, in his dialog against the Pelagians, also quoted from Cyprian's epistle and sanctioned it. Certainly Grotius is mistaken. Baptism of infants was practised generally in Cyprian's time, and it was mentioned one hundred and sixty-five years before the meeting of the ecumenical council of Carthage in A.D. 418—not only mentioned, but the letter of those sixty-six bishops was generally approved, at that time and later.

* Wall, "History of Infant Baptism," vol. i., pp. 65, 66.

CHAPTER V

THE COUNCILS OF THE CHURCH—AMBROSE—EXTRAVAGANT
VIEWS CONCERNING BAPTISM—EXORCISM—INFANT COM-
MUNION; SPONSORS; IMMERSION FOR INFANTS—CON-
FIRMATION OF INFANTS

THE silence of the councils held during the third and fourth centuries upon infant baptism is not without its significance. Questions of interest and importance to the Church, concerning which there was any dispute and upon which some were in doubt, were freely discussed by them, yet in none was there a discussion upon the subject of infant baptism, either as to its propriety or impropriety; no one seems to have entertained a doubt respecting its validity. Since infant baptism was practised, we would naturally expect the question to be raised if there had been any who did not practise it. The influence of Tertullian's views concerning infant baptism was still felt; but that phase of the question did not seem to raise any doubt respecting the virtue of infant baptism *per se*. There can be but one way to interpret this silence in the councils: it clearly indicates that the infant was believed to be a proper subject for baptism; and capable of receiving blessing from God.

On several accounts Ambrose deserves attention, first, because he was the teacher of the great Augustine who seems to have accepted some of his views and emphasized them; second, because he laid more stress upon the spiritual effects of depravity than any of his predecessors; third,

because he was also the first to hint at the possible damnation of all unbaptized infants that died.

In commenting upon Rom. v:12 he says: "We all sinned in the first man, and by the succession of nature, the succession of guilt was transfused from one to all." "Before we are born, we are stained with contagion, and before we see the light we receive the injury of the original transgression." "In whom all sinned,"—thus it is evident that all sinned in Adam, as if in a mass; for having corrupted by sin those whom he begat, all are born under sin. Wherefore we all are sinners from him, because we all are from him."*

Ambrose would have us understand that infants must be reclaimed from this original sin by baptism. In commenting upon Luke i:17 he says of baptism: "By which those infants that are baptized are reformed back again from wickedness [or a wicked state] to the primitive state of their nature." He also cites the Savior's words, "Except any person be born of water," etc. Ambrose says in his comment on this: "You see He excepts no person, not an infant, not one that is hindered by any unavoidable accident."† Then referring to the fate of unbaptized infants he adds: "Suppose that such have that freedom from punishment—which is not clear—yet I question whether they shall have the honor of the kingdom." Having no actual sin or guilt, they may have freedom from punishment, but he fears they will be excluded from heaven. This is the budding of the view afterward proclaimed by Peter Lombard: "*Pœna damni, non pœna sensus*"; also of the *limbus infantum* of the Church of Rome to-day. They (infants) may be free from punishment, but Ambrose is not even sure of that.

He is the first writer to hint at the possible damnation

* Shedd's "History of Christian Doctrine," vol. ii., p. 48.

† Wall, "History of Infant Baptism," vol. i., pp. 114, 115.

of unbaptized infants. Augustine, his disciple, dispensed with all doubts upon this subject, and taught positively that unbaptized infants suffered actual punishment after death. But this view was modified by subsequent theologians. There were, however, among these latter a few exceptions, such as Fulgentius, Alcinus Avitus, and Pope Gregory the Great—writers in the sixth and seventh centuries, who insisted upon full punishment for unbaptized infants. Upon this subject they declare positively, while Ambrose is in doubt both as to their damnation or salvation. Augustine does not accept the theory of the middle state, tho he was familiar with the writings of the Greek Church in which it was advocated. Wall says Augustine considered this state as “a thing hidden or unknown, whether there be any such state.”* He called it “*opertam*”—a thing not certainly revealed, hidden, uncertain.

Before proceeding further, it will not be amiss to dwell more at length upon the extreme value attached to baptism by these Fathers. This was referred to when reviewing “Tertullian and his Times”; now that it has reached its extreme limit, it will be well to call attention to it again. It has its pathetic as well as its magical phase. We know but little of the difficulties these early theologians had to contend with. Their vagaries upon baptism reached such a limit that the application of water to the body under any and all circumstances was considered a matter of grave import.

Athanasius, when a boy, threw water playfully over his playmate while on the seashore; this act, after deliberation by the Church, was believed to be valid baptism. It could not be proven by the Church from Scripture that the apostles had been baptized, and since no one could be saved without baptism they taught that these apostles had been baptized

* Wall, “History of Infant Baptism,” vol. i., p. 116.

by the spray of the storm while on the sea of Galilee. The penitent thief also was baptized by the water that gushed from the Savior's wounded side. So effective was this magical power that such baptism was considered all that was necessary. "No human being," says Vossius, "could pass into the presence of God hereafter unless he had passed through the waters of baptism here."

This effect was wrought not by divine grace so much as by the magical virtue of the water upon the body. Dean Stanley says: "If only the person of a human being be wrapt in the purifying element, he was thought to be redeemed from the uncleanness of his birth."*

It was this wonderful virtue that led the early Church Fathers to teach that for the want of baptism all the saints and patriarchs, except such as died martyrs, were in perdition, until baptized by Christ when He descended into Hades. Of necessity the heathens all perished for want of it.

Baptism was more and more emphasized until Gregory of Nazianzen and Ambrose could say that unbaptized children could not be saved. Gregory, however, argued that since they had suffered, and not caused, the loss of baptism, the righteous Judge would not punish them. And Ambrose, while claiming that there could be no exception made for them on account of their infancy, yet thought they might be free from pain.†

Along with baptism, exorcism began to be practised as a preparation for it. This practise was based upon the belief that Satan possessed the soul, and by this means he must be removed. Tertullian is the first to mention it, and says it is not based upon Scripture, but upon tradition. Cyprian treats of it more at length. At first the ceremony was confined simply to a renunciation of the evil one; but

* "Christian Institutes," p. 15.

† Herzog's "Cyclopedia," Baptism.

in the fourth century it took the form of abjuration by the one officiating; he commanded the unclean spirit to depart. As a rite preparatory to baptism, exorcism came to be regarded as very important; indeed, the Fathers began to teach that without it, children could not be freed from the influence of evil spirits. A distinct office was created for those who attended to this duty. The exorcist fasted, prayed, and performed certain genuflections; putting off the shoes, and even most of the clothing, followed after the imposition of hands. The candidate was then required to face to the west, which was the symbol of darkness, as the east was of light. If an adult, he was to renounce Satan and his works, and declare his determination to resist and repel the evil spirits. The exorcist then breathed upon the candidate one or more times, and then abjured the unclean spirit to come out of him in the name of the Father, Son, and Holy Ghost.*

In the Roman Catholic Church exorcism is still in vogue; children are regarded as belonging to the devil until baptized. The exorcist blows out the evil spirit by his breath, and also breathes on the child again as a symbol of the gift of the Holy Spirit. The Romish Church constitutes the exorcists as one of the four minor orders of the clergy. The Greek Church also has a similar order for the same purpose, and practises exorcism at the present day for infants and adults.

Luther approved of exorcism, not because he thought it essential, but useful, to remind the people vigorously of the power of sin and the devil. These views received no little sympathy from a number of Luther's adherents in Saxony, Würtemberg, and other parts of Germany. Even in the Swedish Church exorcism was practised in its milder forms.

* See Schaff, "Creeds of Christendom," vol. i., p. 399.

In the third century, infant communion had its origin; probably in Northern Africa. Its originator is unknown. Cyprian tells of children who "upon their entrance into the world partook of the body and blood of the Lord." Most authorities trace the custom back to the time of Cyprian, and it is probable that he approved it.

Augustine likewise accepted it; no other construction can be put upon the following from his pen: "The Christians of Africa do well to call baptism itself one's salvation, and the sacrament of Christ's body one's life. . . . Neither salvation, nor eternal life, is to be hoped for by any without baptism, and the body and blood of our Lord; it is in vain promised to *infants*, without them." He asks: "From whence is this? but as I suppose from that ancient and apostolical tradition by which the churches of Christ do naturally hold that without baptism, and partaking of the Lord's table, none can come either to the kingdom of God, or to salvation, and eternal life. For the Scripture, as I showed before, says the same; for what other thing do they hold that call baptism salvation, than that which is said: 'He saved us by the washing of regeneration'? And what other thing do they hold, that call the sacrament of the Lord's table, life, than that which is said, 'I am the Bread of Life,' and 'The bread which I will give is my flesh, which I will give for the life of the world,' and 'Except you eat the flesh of the Son of Man, and drink his blood, you have no life in you'? If, then, so many divine testimonies do agree, neither salvation nor eternal life is to be hoped for *by any* without baptism, and the body and blood of our Lord; it is in vain promised to infants without it."

He also says: "They are infants, but they are made partakers of this table that they may have life in themselves. . . . If infants were not born in sin, Christ's

words, 'Except ye eat the flesh of the Son of Man, and drink his blood, ye have no life in you,' would not be true of them." He does not stumble at the fact that Paul lays down conditions for the worthy communicant with which the infant could not comply. From the sixth to the ninth century Augustine had the following of the whole Church.

Innocent I. of Rome, A.D. 417, in referring to that tenet of Pelagius, that unbaptized infants "tho they can not go to heaven, yet may have eternal life," says: "That infants may, without the grace of baptism, have eternal life, is very absurd, since, except they eat the flesh of the Son of Man, and drink His blood, they have no life in them."* They can have no eternal life, then, except they receive the communion.

Pelagius I., Pope of Rome in 492, decreed that: "No one should venture to exclude any child from this sacrament without which no one can attain to eternal life."

The sixth canon of the Council of Macon (585) decrees that "the consecrated bread, moistened with wine, be distributed every Wednesday, or Friday, to innocent children, who must receive it fasting."

Gregory I. recommended that after baptism, infants should not be permitted to taste food before receiving the Eucharist.

Fulgentius in the ninth century advocated infant communion, but in this same century Paschasius Radbertus denied its necessity. From this time there was division of opinion respecting it until 1538, when the Council of Trent, at its twenty-first session, decreed that "little children are not by any necessity obliged to the sacramental communion of the Eucharist."

While the Roman Church has abandoned infant communion, the Greek Church and the Nestorian still practise it.

* Wall, "History of Infant Baptism," vol. ii., p. 254.

When baptism was administered at this period to infants, it was with the most solemn forms. They had sins, which they could not confess and renounce for themselves, and it became necessary for others to do this for them. If they had pious parents, these must do it; but if none, then other pious persons must act as sponsors. Infant slaves were sometimes offered for baptism by their masters; orphans by those who had them in charge; and unmarried women, who had adopted an infant, would present it for baptism. Even as early as the time of Tertullian sponsors were employed. This was deemed sufficient for infants who had incurred no guilt from actual sin.

The usual mode of baptizing infants, as well as adults, was by immersion. All authorities agree in this, both those who lay great stress upon the mode and those who do not. They baptized in earliest times in rivers, lakes, and other waters, until churches were built; then these were furnished with a font or baptistery for that purpose. Tertullian says: "It is all one, whether one be washed in the sea, or in a pond; in a fountain, or in a river; in a standing, or in a running water. Nor is there any difference between those that John baptized in the Jordan, and those that Peter baptized in the Tiber." *

There are, however, many instances on record where these same teachers, in case of sickness, or for want of sufficient water, performed baptism by pouring. Wall instances the cases of Novatian, Magnes, and others, who were not immersed. Cyprian defended their baptism as valid. He says: "In the sacraments of salvation where necessity compels the shortest ways of transacting divine matters, do by God's gracious dispensation confer the whole benefit."

Immersion was practised for the first thirteen centuries

* "De Baptismo," chap. iv.

almost entirely, and is still in the Eastern churches, even in some of the colder climates.

There seemed to be a fitness in immersion at this time. On account of the ignorance of the people, it would be calculated to emphasize and impress the truth symbolized by baptism. Many renounced Judaism, or heathenism, with little previous preparation or training. A change so great upon such minds would suggest, for themselves and their children, the most imposing mode. While immersion doubtless had this to commend its practise at the time, it, however, was attended with some drawbacks. This imposing ceremony had aided much in developing and fostering that extravagant, magical virtue which now began to be attributed to baptism. This abuse, and the climatic difficulties, afterward led on to the substitution of sprinkling and pouring. Then, as the zeal of the Church increased, serious and thoughtful minds came to attach less importance to mere form; so that the formal and imposing gave way to the internal and more spiritual. One writer, in referring to this matter, says: "It is a striking example of common sense and convenience over the bondage of form and custom. Perhaps no greater change has ever taken place in the outward form of Christian ceremony, with such general agreement. It remains an instructive example of the facility and silence with which, in matters of form, even the widest changes can be effected without any serious loss to Christian truth, and with the great advantage to Christian solemnity and edification."*

When the early Fathers began to insist upon the necessity of the communion for infants, then with it came the rite of confirmation; so that infants must also be confirmed in infancy in order to partake of the communion. The laying on of hands, which was once connected with baptism,

* Stanley, "Christian Institutes," p. 23.

came very naturally to be separated from it, and to be recognized as in itself a sacramental act.

The Roman bishop Melchades (A.D. 314), in his letter to Spanish bishops, characterized the laying on of hands as "a sacrament through which the Holy Ghost, imparted by baptism, is given anew, and in a higher measure." *

The confirmation of infants antedates, or at least is of equal age, with the custom of giving them the communion. "In the Greek Church confirmation is even now administered at the same time with, or as soon as possible after, baptism. Infants receive it as well as adults, it being considered perilous to die without it." †

In treating this subject it became necessary to refer to these usages which, while serving to show the attention paid to infants, at the same time prove that they were considered proper subjects of grace and in no sense spiritual imbeciles. They were in a lost condition by nature, and to be saved divine grace must possess their souls, and the evil nature be changed before they died. The thought that infants had left them no possible escape from this depraved nature, and no avenue whatever to the fountain of life, does not seem to have been dreamed of.

On the other hand, the child dedicated to God in baptism was looked upon as receiving grace which purified it from all immediate defilement, and even enabled it in after-life to cope more successfully with temptation. Infants, in their opinion, were not spiritual imbeciles, and all that was necessary was to bring them to the all-healing fountain of baptism to secure for them a triumphant admission into the kingdom of the blest.

True, there were associated with this belief extravagances and fancies. These, however, do not in any manner affect

* Hagenbach, "History of Doctrine," vol. ii., p. 69.

† McClintock and Strong's Cyclopedia on "Confirmation."

the great central fact itself; it remains the same; infants possessed spiritual susceptibility. It is true that abuses crept in from time to time; it would be strange indeed if they had not. From our knowledge of humanity we have learned to expect such things, and in nothing more than in spiritual matters. In fact, these abuses are the result not so much of evil as of weakness, and as the pendulum of spiritual life swings between the two extremes of indifference and fanaticism, abuses are often productive of good in arousing the indifferent and restraining the fanatical. Then let us hold fast the great fundamental truths, and not be alarmed because, in the progress of the Church, there should appear outcroppings of extravagance and abuse, which may for a time not only overshadow the fundamentals, but even threaten the safety of the Church itself.

CHAPTER VI

AUGUSTINE AND HIS FOLLOWERS—PELAGIUS, FULGENTIUS,
AND GREGORY—ANSELM, PETER LOMBARD, AND OTHERS

THE limits of this work will not permit more than an outline of the views advanced by the prolific Augustine. He taught that original sin is sufficient to damn the soul eternally, because it polluted the soul as well as the body; and as its source is in our voluntary nature, it is, in a sense, voluntary; the posterity with Adam fell. His rigid conclusion is as follows: "As all men have sinned in Adam, they are justly subject to the condemnation of God, on account of this hereditary sin and the guilt thereof."* He also taught that grace, in general, was not irresistible, but that regenerating grace was; it is able to overcome the utmost obstinacy of the human will. "When God wills to save any one, no will of man resists Him. No man is saved but he whom God wills to be saved; it is necessary, therefore, to pray that He may will it, because if He wills it, it must come to pass. It is not to be doubted that the human will can not resist (so as to overcome and defeat) the will of God."†

It is therefore the one whom God wills to save that is saved, because the human will can not resist regenerating grace. Some are renewed, and some are not, by the unconditional decree. God selects from humanity all who are involved in the condemnation of the fall; upon some

* Hagenbach, "History of Doctrine," vol. ii., p. 23.

† Shedd, "History of Doctrine," vol. ii., p. 73.

He bestows saving grace; the remainder are left to their own wilfulness to take the consequences of their wickedness. This pure sovereignty of God displays, as the apostle says, both the "goodness" and the "severity" of God. No injustice is done those who are lost, but exact justice. Only to the saved He extends His mercy—that is all; they, too, could have been punished justly, but for this Sovereign mercy.

God has elected His own from all eternity, predestinated them to the adoption of sons, in order that they might become holy. The non-elect were reprobated only in the sense that God left them to themselves, and from this state there can be no recovery, since such could do nothing to save themselves. Their doom is sealed.

Augustine denied that the heathen were saved, but while contending against Pelagius, he admitted that some of the more virtuous ones would be benefited on account of "their personal excellence, and irrespective of redemption." "In the day of judgment," he said, "the consciences of the heathen will excuse them only to the degree that they will be punished more mildly, in case they have been a law unto themselves and have obeyed it in some measure."*

Augustine was the first to study carefully the epistles of Paul, and to have been influenced by them. The Gospel of John seems to have held universal sway until Augustine ventured to assimilate or combine the Johannean and Pauline teachings. He retains the sacramental views of baptism and the Lord's Supper, but endeavors to reconcile them with Paul's teaching in Rom. v., supplemented by election and reprobation. In respect to infants, Augustine taught that none but the elect would be saved, and that baptism was absolutely necessary; therefore all elect infants were also baptized infants; all those not baptized were lost,

* Shedd, "History of Christian Doctrine," vol. ii., pp. 74, 75.

because baptism manifested election. He taught also that the faith of parents and of the Church was profitable to children; that they professed faith by the words of those who brought them for baptism; and even that they were penitents because their parents and the Church renounced the devil and the world for them. He says: "It is piously and truly believed that the faith of those by whom the child is offered to be consecrated, profits the child; and this the most sound authority of the churches commend."

In reference to Augustine's theory of infant salvation in general, Dr. Schaff says: "In Augustine we already find all the germs of the scholastic and Catholic doctrine of baptism, tho they hardly agree properly with his doctrine of predestination, the absolute sovereignty of divine grace, and the perseverance of the saints. According to this view, baptism is the sacrament of regeneration, which is negatively the means of the forgiveness of sin, that is, both of original and actual sins committed before baptism, and positively the foundation of the new spiritual life of faith, through the impartation of the *gratia operans* and *cooperans*. The subjective condition of this effect is the worthy receiving—that is, penitent faith. Since in the child there is no actual sin, the effect of baptism in this case is limited to the remission of the guilt of original sin, and since the child itself can not yet believe, the Christian Church (represented by the parents and the sponsors) here appears in its behalf, as Augustine likewise supposed, and assumes the responsibility of the education of the baptized child to Christian majority.

"As to infant baptism, there was, in this period, a general conviction of its propriety and of its apostolic origin. Even the Pelagians were no exceptions, tho infant baptism does not properly fit in their system; for they denied original sin; and baptism, as a rite of purification, has reference

always to the forgiveness of sins; the Pelagians attributed to baptism an improving effect." *

Augustine is the first author to teach positively that all unbaptized infants that died were damned. "God forbid," he writes, "that I should leave the matter of infants so, as to say, it is uncertain whether those that are regenerated in Christ, if they die in infancy, do come to eternal salvation, and those who are not regenerated do fall into the second death; whereas that which is written, 'By one man sin entered into the world and death by sin, and so death passed upon all men,' can not be otherwise understood." †

Grotius thinks that Augustine was driven to take this stand while debating with Pelagius, inasmuch as he had never taken that view prior to this. He would have us infer that this was not Augustine's settled conviction. But his delay in expressing the view may be accounted for, as Wall suggests, on the ground that the occasion may never have presented itself before. Indeed, Augustine, in a letter to St. Jerome, written in the heat of the Pelagian controversy, gives the following reason for not asserting it sooner: "There was none of that dispute," he says, "raised then, which is now." He means the dispute concerning the damnation of unbaptized infants. It was, doubtless, the firm conviction of Augustine before the Pelagian controversy that such was the fate of non-elect, unbaptized infants. In his later years he labored hard to prove that there was no such middle state for infants as Gregory of Nazianzen held, or as Pelagius who taught that they could not enter the kingdom of God, but would occupy a middle state, and have eternal life.

To these Augustine replied: "There is no salvation, but in the kingdom of God, nor any middle place, where any

* Schaff, "Church History," vol. ii., p. 483.

† Wall, "History of Infant Baptism," vol. i., p. 128.

one can be except with the devil, who is not with Christ. Hence our Lord Himself, that He might uproot from the minds of mistaken men any opinion of, I know not what middle state (which some men go about to attribute to unbaptized infants, as they shall, being sinless, be in eternal life, but not being baptized, shall not be with Christ in His kingdom), gave this definite sentence to stop their mouths: 'He that is not with me is against me.' Give us, therefore, an infant; if he be with Christ already, what is he baptized for? But if, as the truth is, he be therefore baptized, that he may be with Christ, then it is sure that before he is baptized, he is not with Christ."*

Augustine would have us know that he taught that there was no middle state for such infants and no escape from damnation. He affirmed that the virtue of baptism was not in the water; the ministers of Christ perform the external ceremony, but the grace of Christ accompanies it with invisible grace. While baptism is common to all, yet grace is not, since some are baptized who are not of the elect. This same baptism may impart life to one infant and be of no saving benefit to another; he therefore limits its efficacy to those who are the chosen heirs of eternal life, according to the foreknowledge of God, and all such receive baptism. "God does not," he says, "suffer any infant to die unbaptized, but such as He foresaw would have been wicked and impenitent, if they had lived." All heathen infants that died were necessarily lost, never having received baptism, and with them all other infants who for any reason failed of baptism. The exceptions made by Augustine's predecessors on the ground of martyrdom and intention could not apply in the case of infants.

During the period succeeding that of the apostolic Fathers, the Church adopted for its maxim: "*Extra eccle-*

* Wall, "History of Infant Baptism," vol. i., p. 191.

siam nulla salus" (out of the Church there can be no salvation). This precluded all hope of salvation out of the visible Church. All grace was to be found within her, hence all infants unbaptized were excluded from the kingdom of heaven; but until Augustine repudiated the middle state, no one had ventured boldly to consign the unbaptized infant to eternal damnation.

It seems unaccountable that a mind like Augustine's should have attached no importance to the words of the Savior: "Of such is the kingdom of heaven." No doubt the belief that none could be saved out of the Church had much to do with this. If there could be no salvation out of the Church, how then could unbaptized infants be saved?

If, however, his explanation of the degree of the punishment of infants be considered, its severity is greatly modified. He taught that their sufferings, tho eternal, are bearable, being only of the mildest character. He even went so far as to say that "infants, dying without the baptism of Christ, will not be punished *with so great pain as that it were better for them not to have been born*, since our Lord spoke this not of all sinners, but of the most profligate and impious ones; for in the day of judgment some shall be punished in a more tolerable degree than others, as He said of the men of Sodom, and would be understood not of them only. Who can then believe that infants unbaptized, who have only original sin, and are not loaded with any sins of their own, will be in the greatest condemnation of them all?" (See Wall.) This reduces their punishment to the minimum. It was only thus that Augustine could maintain his exalted views of the efficacy of baptism and the dogma—no salvation out of the visible Church—and, at the same time, reconcile his own mind to the justice of the eternal damnation of unbaptized infants. We can see in this instance the enthralling effect of dogmas inherited from the

past, and vigorously advocated in after-years. Tho contradicted by the Savior's own teaching, and irreconcilable with our plainest views of divine justice, yet Augustine seeks, by tempering the punishment of infants, firmly to hold the dogma. The fear lest some link in the chain of one's theological system may be lost or broken, and the whole thereby become imperiled, may account for this sometimes. But oftener, probably, the training of years has blinded the mind to all proof to the contrary. A giant prejudice makes us helpless in its grasp.

It would be well for us not to accept too readily as sound some speculative doctrines, even tho they may seem necessary to complete some particular system of theology. The history of such doctrines proves that errors have in this way been foisted upon the Church. These doctrines have been taught as sound, yet in the lapse of years, centuries perhaps, they were changed; some newly evolved system made such change necessary. This is certainly true with respect to the subject of infant salvation, as one will readily see who traces its history in the Christian Church down to the present time.

Nor should we too readily conclude that because we are untrammelled by prejudice in some directions we are in all. No one investigated more thoroughly, nor was more an innovator in doctrine, than Augustine. His great system of election and reprobation was of his own creation, yet even he was so trammelled by his predilections respecting salvation in the visible Church, and the efficacy of the sacraments, that he sought to reconcile the latter with election and reprobation—two entirely irreconcilable systems of doctrine. He taught that the infant could not be saved unless of the elect, at the same time it could not be saved unless baptized. So in regard to the Lord's Supper as previously quoted: "Neither salvation nor eternal life is to be

hoped for by any without baptism and the body and blood of our Lord; it is in vain promised to *infants* without them."

The logical conclusion is, that only the elect infants and those who receive the sacraments are saved. Election must be combined with the sacraments, and to effect such combination Augustine draws the unwarranted conclusion that all elect infants do receive the sacraments.

The system of election and the sacramental are separate and distinct, and any attempt to combine or harmonize them must betray weakness somewhere. In Augustine it was that which sprang from his early training which led him to esteem so highly the sacraments that he could not surrender their saving efficacy for the sake of clothing the election with absolute power of salvation without them. The election must therefore be dependent on the sacraments, and the sacraments on election. This emasculates both. To make election dependent upon the sacraments is not election; and to make the sacraments dependent upon election does violence to the sacramental system; an attempt to combine the two compromises both. The combination is a disappointment, yet this is what Augustine attempted.

Pelagius, Augustine's contemporary, taught that there was no original sin in infants, and without baptism they, at death, entered into eternal life, but not into the kingdom of heaven. In order to enter the latter, baptism was necessary; the Savior had said as much to Nicodemus: "Except a man be born of water and of the Spirit he can not enter the kingdom of heaven."

There can be no doubt but that Pelagius had carefully studied the writings of Origen, and from them imbibed enough to make it possible for him to teach that infants did not inherit original sin. From the writers of the East-

ern Church he probably received some conception of a middle state for unbaptized infants, and that may be what Pelagius means when he says, "unbaptized infants after death receive eternal life." This is neither heaven nor hell, but a middle state, milder probably than the middle state to which Gregory Nazianzen assigned them.

In recognizing baptism as an essential in order that infants may enter the kingdom of heaven, Pelagius, without doubt, recognizes the fact that the infant possesses spiritual susceptibility; he even goes further, and says that he "never had heard, no not even any impious heretic or sectary, that denied infant's baptism; and that he thought there could not be any one so ignorant as to imagine that infants could enter the kingdom of heaven without it." * This is valuable testimony from the pen of one who has been regarded as a heretic.

The Arians and the Donatists also practised infant baptism, and never disputed its necessity. Augustine bears similar testimony with Pelagius to the universal practise of infant baptism among those who baptized at all. There were several heretical sects which baptized no one, but they also rejected the Scriptures, or most of them.

Irenæus, "the mauler of heresies," details the practises of various heretics, wherein they differed from the orthodox; strange enough, he never finds any fault with them in their practise of infant baptism. The same is true of other polemical writers, such as Epiphanius, Philastrius, and Theodoret. None of these find any objections to the practise, or non-practise, of infant baptism among heretical sects. From the importance attached to it, if neglected, they would have certainly made a note of such fact. Augustine charges Pelagius with baptizing infants upon a false ground—that of simply advancing them out of an innocent

* Wall, "History of Infant Baptism," vol. i., p. 248.

state to a better one—with few exceptions all others baptized them on account of original sin.

Such unanimity upon this subject is remarkable. Strange enough that not one of all these heretical sects objected to the baptism of infants on the ground that the Great Commission does not include them, or because they are spiritual incapables and imbeciles. Five hundred years of such unanimity is remarkable indeed.*

The contest with Pelagianism resulted in other writers taking stronger grounds against the salvation of unbaptized infants than Augustine had taken.

Fulgentius, called the Augustine of the sixth century, consigned all baptized infants to eternal fire, and did not hesitate to teach that even the still-born shared the same fate. He says: "Whether they die in their mother's womb, or after they are born, one must hold for certain, and undoubted, that they are to be tormented with the everlasting punishment of eternal fire." In another place they are "to suffer the endless torments of hell, where the devil and his angels are to burn for evermore." †

Pope Gregory, A.D. 600, says: "Some are taken from this present life before they come to have any good or ill deserts by their own deeds, and having not the sacrament of salvation (baptism) for their deliverance from original sin, tho they have done nothing of their own here, yet there they come to torment." In another place: "They undergo eternal torments." ‡

This belief in the punishment visited upon unbaptized infants after death was maintained until the time of Anselm, or until the eleventh century. While Anselm denied

* Wall, "History of Infant Baptism," vol. i., pp. 264-269.

† See Hagenbach, "History of Doctrine," vol. i., p. 436; also, Wall, "History of Infant Baptism," vol. ii., pp. 108, 109.

‡ Wall, "History of Infant Baptism," vol. ii., p. 110.

that there was a middle place for infants, who must go either to heaven or to hell, yet allowed a difference in the degree of torments. He says: "All shall not be equally tormented in hell. For after the day of judgment, there will be no angel nor human person but what will be either in the kingdom of God or else in hell. So, then, the sin of infants is less than the sin of Adam; and yet none can be saved without that universal satisfaction by which sin, be it great or small, is to be forgiven."

In the middle of the twelfth century a great change took place in the teaching of the Western Church. Its views were modified in this particular so as to accord more with the belief of the Eastern.

The Augustinian view had suffered a decline in consequence of the attacks of semi-Pelagian views which were advanced.

Peter Lombard made a very important distinction between the punishment visited upon those who had no actual, only original sin, and those who had both. That for original sin was "*pœna damni, non pœna sensus*," the punishment simply of the loss of heaven, not of the senses or torment.

This view received the indorsement of Pope Innocent III. in the thirteenth century. The punishment for original sin he described as "*cauentia visionis Dei*," or deprivation of the sight of God; that for actual sin, "*gehennæ perpetui*" or "*perpetui cruciatus*," the torments of an everlasting hell. Alexander de Ales and Thomas Aquinas—in fact, all the Schoolmen—accepted the same. While there was no middle state for those who were lost for want of baptism, and because of original sin, yet there was a *limbus infantum*, where the punishment was simply the loss of heaven.

It is probable that this is the view the second Ecumenical Council of Lyons (A.D. 1274) and the Council of Flor-

ence (1439) intended to sanction when they declared that "the souls of those who pass away in mortal sin or in original sin, alone descend immediately to hell, to be punished, however, with unequal torment." It was now the popular belief that the punishment for infants was *pœna damni* simply.

Gregorius Ariminensis, who was called "*durus pater infantum*," the severe father to children, and Dreido also, made a vain attempt to revive the severity of Fulgentius, but did not succeed. The milder view of the Schoolmen prevailed, and obtains to this day in the Catholic Church. It has been styled "a Pelagian conceit," but it might rather be termed the conceit of Gregory Nazianzen; yet it is neither, since these latter believed in a middle state, while the Schoolmen did not.

The Council of Trent, in its fifth session, was about to anathematize Luther for his alleged severity to infants dying without baptism, and would have done so but for the respect he had for the teachings of Augustine and others upon this subject.

CHAPTER VII

THE PIOUS INTENTION OF PARENTS BENEFICIAL TO THE INFANT—AQUINAS AND GERSON, WYCLIF, WALTER BRUTE, WESSEL, AND HUSS—SCHOLASTICISM: ITS DI- VISIONS—DOMINICANS AND FRANCISCANS—THE COUN- CIL OF TRENT

IN the more Western countries there were some who entertained the hope that the infant, whose parents eagerly desired but failed to perform its baptism because of its sudden death, would be benefited at least by such intention. Hincmar, Archbishop of Rheims, A.D. 860, is one of these; he says: "The faith and godly desire of their parents, or godfathers, who, in sincerity, desired baptism for them, but obtained it not, may be a help by the gift of Him whose Spirit (which gives regeneration) breathes where it pleases."

Later, Aquinas, Gerson, and others ventured to indulge the hope that still-born children might, without baptism, be saved: "That such an infant being subject to no action of man, but of God only, He may have ways of saving it, for aught we know." Tho they extended this hope only to the still-born, Luther afterward indulged the same hope and extended it to all unbaptized infants.

Wall says: "Vossius brings in St. Bernard, Petrus Blesensis, Hugo de Sancto Victore, and even Augustine himself, as asserting a possibility of salvation, and the kingdom of heaven without baptism; and he seems to understand this, their assertion, to extend to the case of infants."* Wall, however, says that Vossius is mistaken,

* Wall, "History of Infant Baptism," vol. ii., p. 113.

that these writers refer only to adults, such as the dying thief, who could exercise faith, and therefore, tho deprived of baptism against his will, could be saved; but to infants who could not have faith, it did not apply.

Some later writers advanced even farther than Peter Lombard and Aquinas, and thought it possible that lost infants might be engaged in the study of nature, and occasionally receive visits from the angels. For one to be so far removed from Pelagianism as to entertain Augustine's and Anselm's views of original sin, and yet reach so mild a conclusion as this on the subject of future punishment for unbaptized infants, is proof that belief in the magical power of baptism was waning, and that it was even now dawning upon theologians that God might have some other way to save such infants. Aquinas's view respecting the lot of still-born infants affords the first ray of hope for more than twelve hundred years.

John Gerson, at the Council of Constance—the one which condemned Huss to be burned—in an address before it said: "God has not so tied the mercy of His salvation to common laws and sacraments, but that without prejudice to His law He can sanctify children yet unborn by the baptism of His grace, or the power of the Holy Ghost." He even exhorts parents to pray that, if the child should die before it can be baptized, the Lord may sanctify it. Gerson only intends to suggest that all hope is not taken away, for there is no certainty without revelation.

A later writer, Gabriel Biel (A.D. 1495), also held that "it was in accord with God's mercy to seek out some remedy for such infants."*

Wyclif ventured to take more advanced ground than Aquinas, and entertained a reasonable hope for all infants whose parents had intended to have them baptized, but

* Warfield, "Infant Salvation," p. 13.

failed through no fault of theirs. He revives the old belief of "pious intention," which Gregory Nazianzen advocated; of such he said: "It is not clear to me whether such an infant shall be saved or damned." He does not hesitate to call those presumptuous who teach positively that God will either save or damn such infants; but in case they are lost, their damnation will be not simply the loss of heaven, but sensible punishment also. There is no middle state.

Wyclif also repudiated the *ex opere operato* effect of the sacraments, as taught by the Schoolmen, tho he held the sacraments themselves in highest reverence. He also believed that when infants were properly baptized with water, they at the same time received the baptism of the Holy Spirit. He repudiated the scholastic view of the magical power of baptism, as also the *limbus infantum* of the schoolmen, with the *pœna damni, non pœna sensus* view of Lombard; also, the middle state of the Fathers of the Eastern Church. There were but two states for infants: heaven and hell. The lost infant suffered the same in kind with the wilful sinner, tho much less.

Walter Brute, a scholar of Wyclif, did not entertain any doubt respecting the salvation of the infants of pious parents, even tho they were not baptized. "How shall the infant be damned," he exclaims, "that is born of faithful parents that do not despise, but rather desire to have their children baptized!" He carries the pious intention to such extent that it stands in lieu of baptism.

Wessel, born soon after Wyclif died, tho trained in scholasticism, predicted its speedy overthrow. He insisted that the Scriptures were the only true foundation of faith, and faith without works, the only ground of justification. He also insisted upon inward, vital piety.* This writer

* Shedd, "History of Christian Doctrine," vol. ii., p. 334.

has been styled "the forerunner of Luther." He regarded the sacraments in the light that Wyclif did, and the two "preserved the medium between that superstitious, and merely external, view by which the sacrament was changed, as it were, into a charm, and the fanatical and subjective theory adopted by the pantheistic sects, who in idealistic pride rejected all visible pledges and seals of invisible blessings." *

John Huss, in the fourteenth century, did not hesitate to accept, in all cases of necessity, the faithful parent's intention and desire, in lieu of the baptism of the infant. The Papists charged him with this when they condemned him. Such views brought the early reformers into sharp conflict with the favorite dogmas of scholasticism. The reaction predicted by Wessel had indeed begun; tho feeble at first, it was destined to become a gulf-stream forcing its way through the great stagnant ocean of Catholicism, gathering energy and strength as it swept along.

It is believed that scholasticism owed its origin to the application of Aristotle's methods of reasoning and philosophy to theology. Some writers fancy they find its commencement in the writings of Augustine, while others date it as late as the ninth century. All agree that Anselm was its first prime representative. The whole system has been severely criticized, and justly too; but after all, it was just such a development as must, in the nature of things, sooner or later have taken place in theology.

From the sixth to the eleventh century there was a process of evolution in doctrine that called for the development, defense, and systematizing which it received. Ordinary minds were not equal to this task.

"There were giants in those days": Anselm, Abelard, Duns Scotus, Occam, and Aquinas will compare in acute

* Hagenbach, "History of Doctrine," vol. ii., p. 326.

and profound reasoning with the first theologians of any age. Anselm's view of the Atonement stands as the one universally accepted by Protestant theology to-day. After scholasticism had reached its extreme limit in the thirteenth century, a division arose in the ranks of Catholicism which was destined to weaken its hold upon the nations of Europe. It never after presented a united front; there was conflict in its own ranks. The two factions are generally known as the Franciscans and Dominicans. Duns Scotus and Thomas Aquinas became in time the respective theological leaders of these. The one was a Platonist in philosophy; the other, Aristotelian. They disagreed concerning the dogmas of the immaculate conception, original sin, and free grace. They were divided also upon the question of the sacraments, Scotus holding that they conferred grace morally, and Aquinas, physically.

Following this division and consequent weakness in the ranks of Catholicism came the views of Wyclif and the Lollards in England; Huss and Jerome in Hungary; Savonarola and Arnold of Brescia in Italy; Wessel, Goch, and Wesel, in Germany; and the Netherlands were fast leavening the people for the Reformation under Luther. Wherever Catholicism held sway, the adherents of the Pope were ill at ease. They pressed Paul III. to call a council to devise means of stemming the rising tide. The Pope was loth to do this, lest his own authority might suffer in the outcome. During the earlier years of the Reformation Luther himself hoped to effect a reconciliation with Rome by means of a general council, and when his teachings were called in question, he appealed to such a body; but later he appealed to the Word of God instead of to a general council.

The pressure finally became so great that it was necessary for Rome to convoke such a council. It was called to meet

on June 2, 1536, but was postponed and reconvoked from time to time, so that the first session was not held until December 13, 1545. It was convened in Trent, a city in Austria. The council lasted, tho with long intervals, until December, 1563—eighteen years. At the fifth session of this council those were anathematized who denied that all the merit of Christ is applied to infants by the sacrament of baptism rightly administered; also those who denied that the newly born infant needed not to be baptized, even tho its parents had been baptized, or who held that it derives nothing of original sin from Adam, which has need of expiation by the “laver of regeneration” (*i.e.*, baptism). Infants are to be “baptized for the remission of sins that are in them, that they may be cleansed away by regeneration. This they have contracted by generation. For unless a man be born again of water, and of the Holy Ghost, he can not enter into the kingdom of God.”

At this same session, the council also anathematized any who denied that, through the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ, which is conferred in baptism, the guilt of original sin is remitted, “or even assert that the whole of that which has the true and proper nature of sin, is not taken away; or say it is only raised, or not imputed.”

This council did not deny that there remained in the baptized concupiscence, or the incentive to sin; but this is not sin in baptized persons, for they are born again.

At the seventh session, held March 3, 1547, fourteen canons were adopted. In the thirteenth it is stated: “If any one saith that little children, for that they have not actual faith, are not, after having truly received baptism, to be reckoned among the faithful, and that for this cause they are to be rebaptized, when they have attained to years of discretion, or that it is better that the baptism of such be omitted, than that while not believing by their own act, they

should be baptized in the faith of the Church, let him be anathema.”

The fourteenth canon says: “If any one saith that those who have been thus baptized when children are, when they have grown up, to be asked whether they will ratify what their sponsors promised in their names, when they were baptized; and that in case they answer that they will not, they are to be let to their own will, and are not to be compelled meanwhile to a Christian life by any other penalty save that they be excluded from the participation of the Eucharist and of the other sacraments, until they repent, let him be anathema.”

At the twenty-first session, July 16, 1562, chapter iv., the council declared, “That little children who have not attained to the use of reason are not, by any necessity, obliged to the sacramental communion of the Eucharist, for as much as having been regenerated by the laver of baptism, and being incorporated with Christ, they can not at that age lose the grace which they have already acquired of being the sons of God.”

And in the fourth canon of this session they say: “If any one saith that the communion of the Eucharist is necessary for little children before they have arrived at years of discretion, let him be anathema.”

The Council of Trent, in none of its sessions, positively declared that unbaptized infants that died were lost, but this had ever been the steady belief of the Catholic Church from the time of Augustine to the present, and is to be fairly inferred from its views respecting original sin, baptism, and the *limbus infantum*. None of its councils have ever taught otherwise. They have always regarded infant punishment as of a mild character, tho the views of individuals upon this have taken a wide range; they varied as much as the subject and orthodoxy would permit. Infants

do not suffer the torments to which wilful sinners are subject; but simply the *pœna damni*. In defining this punishment Catholic writers were not always agreed as to whether it implied any positive torment, or only a deprivation of the vision of God, attended by no sense of loss or pain of any kind, as Aquinas was prone to believe.

The Council of Trent refused to commit itself to any particular view. The Dominicans, however, went so far as to define their belief upon this perplexing subject, and stoutly affirmed that lost infants were in a dark subterranean region without fire. The Franciscans, on the other hand, agreed that they were above the earth, and enjoyed the light. Others of the council took even a more cheerful view of their condition than this, and believed they were so favorably circumstanced as to be permitted to study nature, and even to receive visits at times from the saints and angels. But the council would commit itself to neither of these views, and left the lost infant's state an open question. It is probable that the majority leaned toward the milder views of Aquinas rather than to those of Lombard, since they came near anathematizing some of the earlier views of Luther respecting the suffering of lost infants.

The reader has noted that at its twenty-first session this council repudiates the practise of giving the communion to infants.

The subject of "intention" came before the council in several forms; first, as to the serious intention of parents who desired baptism for their infants, but failed through no fault of theirs. This was the earliest phase of the subject; the reader will remember that it was favorably considered even as early as the days of Chrysostom. Gregory Nazianzen allotted a "middle place" to all such infants, because the intention of their parents entitled them to some regard. Even Augustine said that such intention of the

parent might modify the degree of the infant's condemnation, but there was, in his opinion, no middle place for them. Hincmar was of the same opinion.

Gerson, in the fourteenth century, taught that this intention of godly parents might answer instead of baptism in the case of still-born infants; the same was advocated by Cardinal Cajetan at the Council of Trent, and was apparently accepted, as in Canon Four it anathematized those who teach that the sacraments of the new law are not necessary unto salvation, but superfluous; and that without them, or without *the desire (intention) thereof*, "men obtain of God, through faith alone, the grace of justification." This recognizes "the baptism-of-intention" view not only for infants but for adults also, at least so far as such men as the dying thief are concerned, and presumably for still-born infants also. Other writers, a few years after the council had finally adjourned, advanced the same view.

The council accepted Augustine's view, that "intention" in the case of adults would be sufficient, but since infants can not have this intention for themselves, their condition is left in doubt, except that only of the still-born. But one of the Council's writers goes further and says: "It is most firmly established in the Church, that no infant, apart from baptism in fact, since he can not have intention, enters the kingdom of heaven."*

The matter of "intention" was applied in another manner by this council. In Canon Eleven, of the seventh session, it decreed: "If any one saith that in ministers, where they effect and confer the sacraments, there is not required the intention at least of doing what the Church does, let him be anathema." The intention of the ministering priest becomes essential to the validity of the sacraments, but even his intention is not valid without the sacraments; in the

* De Soto; per Warfield, on "Infant Salvation," p. 16.

other case, the intention of the adult was valid without them. This must have involved the sacraments in grave uncertainties; how could it be known whether the priest was sincere or not? One writer says it "exposes the laity to doubt, hesitation, and insecurity whenever they receive a sacrament at the hand of a priest in whose piety and sincerity they have not full confidence. If a wicked priest, for instance, should baptize a child without an inward intention to baptize him, it would follow that the baptism was null and void for want of intention."

The declarations of this council have been dwelt upon somewhat at length, because in the summary of its doctrines, called "The Tridentine Profession of Faith," article five reads: "I embrace and receive all and every one of the things which have been defined and declared in the holy Council of Trent concerning original sin and justification." It also requires the acceptance of the decrees respecting the sacraments, purgatory, images, indulgences; in fact, all the canons of the council.

As there has been no general council in the Catholic Church since the one at Trent, all these canons remain in force to this day. The Vatican Council in 1870 did not undertake to alter or amend any of them, but in a general way confirmed them. Most of its time was occupied in the discussion of the primacy of Peter—its perpetuity, power, and nature; also the infallibility of the Pope. The canons of Trent, therefore, stand to-day as the doctrines of the Catholic Church. One authority says: "Every doctrine which deviates from these must renounce all claim to Catholicity."* In view of the foregoing, the Council of Trent merits even more attention at our hands than has been given it.

Notwithstanding the positive declarations of this council,

* Hagenbach, "History of Doctrine," vol. iii., p. 2.

there were not wanting among the better class of Catholics some who expressed hopes akin to those of Huss and of Wyclif, that the pious intention of parents might so far avail for all infants as to encourage parents to pray for them. Gerson and Biel, Cardinal Cajetan and Cassander, have been pointed out as such, tho the statements of the first two are too conservative to be assuring. Cajetan says such a belief "is not unreasonable"; but adds that he speaks "under correction." Cassander, however, encourages parents to hope and to pray earnestly for their children so dying, but also adds: "This opinion of mine concerning infants I will not defend with contention or obstinacy."

CHAPTER VIII

RECENT CATHOLIC WRITERS, KLEE, ST. GEORGE MIVART,
AND OTHERS

OUT of respect for the canon relating to "intention," recent Catholic writers have ventured to advance some singular views respecting unborn infants. Klee, one of the most distinguished of the nineteenth century, "holds that a lucid interval is accorded to infants in the article of death, so that they may conceive the wish, or desire (intention), for baptism."* They could then be saved just as the dying thief was. Every possible conceit in the later centuries has been entertained and expressed that could afford any relief for the hapless infant, who, through no fault of its own, passed out of this life without the saving efficacy of baptism.

The part which the doctrine of "intention" has played in Catholic theology for more than a thousand years is very significant, and even to this day it holds its place in Protestant theology because of the superior advantage it assigns to the infants of believers, notably so in the decretal system, where the children of the elect are esteemed as especially favored.

To this day the Roman Catholic Church has failed to heed the earnest protests which a few of her writers have made to her doctrine of *pœna damni, non pœna sensus*. This doctrine has stood for three hundred and fifty years. As late as 1861 Perrone, speaking of unbaptized infants,

* Warfield, "Infant Salvation," p. 18.

said, "That children of this kind descend into hell, or incur damnation." Hurter, who tho educated a Protestant became a Catholic in 1844, has this to say respecting the views entertained: "Altho all Catholics agree that infants, who, dying without baptism, are excluded from the beatific vision and so suffer loss, are lost; they yet differ among themselves in their determination of the nature and condition of the state into which such infants pass."*

Bellarmino, Perrone, in fact nearly all of the Catholic school of theology, have condemned the views of Aquinas, and others milder than he, as Pelagianizing in their tendency, because they attached to original sin no guilt or penalty; some of them, not even the loss of the beatific vision. Perrone says: "Catholic theologians hold it with the death of sin, so that the exclusion from the beatific vision has the nature of penalty and of damnation proceeding from sin."†

A writer and scientist, who is a Catholic, has recently undertaken to give his Church's views upon this subject in an article entitled, "Happiness in Hell." In treating it he refers to infants. We have, because of its exceedingly liberal view, taken the liberty of quoting copious extracts from this article. The writer says that the Catholic Church still teaches that baptism is "of three kinds: (1) that of water; (2) that of blood, *i.e.*, martyrdom; and (3) that of desire." Since martyrdom is out of the question now, they have substituted for it voluntary flagellations; this they call the baptism of blood. Of course, the infant can not become subject to this baptism of blood; neither to the baptism of desire. "To really desire and enjoy what is thus naturally altogether beyond him, he must have infused into him a corresponding higher faculty," and

* Warfield, "Infant Salvation," p. 19.

† *Idem*, p. 21.

be "raised to the higher order of grace whereby he was enabled to desire," etc.

There is, therefore, only water baptism left for the infant. Purgatory itself can be of no service, since it is but a temporary state. The only conclusion is that the unbaptized infant must be lost. "It is," says the writer, "most certain that the Roman Catholic Church is definitely committed to the doctrine that souls condemned to hell remain there for all eternity, and that all of them suffer the loss of the beatific vision (*pœna damni*), while a portion of them further suffer what is technically denominated the *pœna sensus*—the equivalent of hell fire. That between those who are eternally excluded from heaven there are differences of conditions—it may be enormous differences—is freely admitted both by Greeks and Latins. . . . It is no less true that such differences are declared to be nothing in comparison with the difference which exists between those admitted to the beatific vision and the most favored of all those who are excluded from it."* In other words, the difference between the infant's lost condition and that of the worst sinners after death, is not near so great as the difference between lost infants and saved infants. The loss of baptism must therefore be a great loss to them, since the difference "may be enormous," but the *pœna sensus* suffering is "inexpressibly greater."

In spite of Bellarmine's and Perrone's defense of the Tridentine profession of faith, and their condemnation of the milder views of Aquinas, this same writer (Mivart) quotes him with approval and even improves upon him in his own explanation of his probable meaning. He says: "Amongst the excluded, who have never forfeited grace,

* St. George Mivart, *Century Magazine*, December, 1892. This writer has recently been declared a heretic, but not on account of the views just quoted.

are, of course, unbaptized infants, who are represented as enjoying an eternity of natural happiness and union with God beyond anything we can imagine or conceive of." In the words of St. Thomas Aquinas: "They are joined to God through the natural good they receive, and also they are enabled even to enjoy natural knowledge and love."

To conclude that such infants are "enjoying a natural happiness beyond anything we can imagine or conceive of," can hardly be reconciled with Aquinas's view; certainly not with the *pœna damni*, *non pœna sensus* view, which he has quoted approvingly. This writer's view is so liberal as to repudiate practically the maxim adopted by Petavius and others, "*Gradus non mutant speciem*." Petavius changes the degree of punishment, but not the kind. The distinction between the punishment of the lost is only in the degree, not in the kind. Mivart even makes himself liable to the charge of teaching a third state; he continues: "The blessed in heaven, and those excluded from it, form, as it were, two genera; the latter being composed of two species: (1) those who have not, and (2) those who have, forfeited a supernatural beatitude."

The first of this species, not having forfeited "*a supernatural beatitude*," are even more favorably circumstanced than those whose future state, Aquinas thought, possessed natural blessings only. This is practically the third state of Pelagius. Does not Mivart admit as much? He says: "Thus it may be said that practically there are three permanent states, altho, since the difference between the lowest of those in heaven and the highest of those excluded from it, is inexpressibly greater than that between any of those not in heaven, a bifold division is more logical."

This latter clause will not satisfy the Tridentine decrees. If Aquinas was charged with Pelagianizing, how much heavier would the charge rest against Mivart? To add to

the enjoyment of a "supernatural beatitude" and a separate state, Mivart also writes of dead infants: "It is even maintained that they may be unconscious of what their state really is. No suffering from such knowledge can possibly exist in the case of children."

It is not proper to charge these extremely favorable views upon the Church of Rome; they are from a single individual, and he not an ecclesiastic, but a scientist. The inflexible canons of that Church must stand or fall with such explanations as Bellarmine and his following have given them. There is something radically wrong in this method of attempting to tone down the severity of a dogma; it is practically explaining it away; it is seeking the needed correction in the consequences, rather than the cause; it is trying to correct the evil down the stream, instead of at the fountainhead. The tendency of all such reasoning and speculation is to bring the dogma into contempt. When you transform damnation into a veritable elysium, then even the *pœna damni* of the schoolmen loses its objectionable character.

Mivart also claims that a number of Catholic authorities have, within the last fifteen years, ventured to extend the natural blessings which Aquinas extended only to infants, even to adult heathen "who die with their moral and intellectual faculties so imperfectly developed as to be in this matter like children. That such a belief was not uncommon in earlier times is shown us by Dante, who depicts Virgil and other pagan worthies in a state of natural happiness." *

It is a fact that the schoolmen had, besides a *limbus infantum*, also a *limbus patrum*, the abode of the Old-Testament worthies when Christ went to preach after His death to the "spirits in prison." They also called this "Abra-

* Century Magazine, p. 905, December, 1892.

ham's bosom," but this was only for the saints who, because they had not been baptized, could not enter heaven. But no such place was assigned to heathens; at least their canons make no such declaration. There may have been obscure writers, or else poets who, like Dante, have, with singular poetic license, dared to revel in such theological fancies; but in all this there is nothing authoritative.

Mivart ventures the opinion that "a process of evolution takes place in hell," so that the life of lost souls is one of "progress and gradual amelioration; tho never, of course, to the extent of raising the lost to supernatural beatitude, for the tenants of hell are its tenants eternally. . . . Many of the Fathers held that a mitigation was vouchsafed to the damned from time to time. Augustine distinctly allows this opinion. Gregory Nazianzen, John Chrysostom, and various others, down to Peter Lombard, supported it, while later, Petavius and others favored it. The learned Petavius boldly affirms that 'this opinion, which has been entertained by Fathers of the Church, is not to be lightly treated.' "

Augustine does not give this periodical mitigation theory as his own opinion, but permits others to entertain it, so long as they do not reject the eternity of future punishment. He says so long as they limit it to this occasional mitigation, they "do not run counter of Scripture." This is as much as to say that the Scriptures neither approve nor disapprove it. It is probable that Gregory and Chrysostom held such views respecting those who were not in hell itself, but in the middle state. But Mivart says: "The learned Petavius boldly affirms that this opinion which has been entertained by the Fathers of the Church, is not to be lightly treated." These, however, are the precise words of Petavius: "The opinion [of these certain periods of mitigation] is not to be lightly brushed aside as an absurd-

ity, tho it is opposed to the general view of Catholics at the present day." It is the "general view" of the Church we are after, not that of a few individuals.

Petavius does not give this his indorsement; he is non-committal. Mivart also says: "It is taught by Catholic theologians that this is the doctrine; that for every being, including, of course, all the damned, existence is better than annihilation." He then says: "St. Augustine distinctly affirms that the damned prefer their existence as damned souls to non-existence," and then gives two references from his works.* In neither one of these references does Augustine speak at all concerning the future existence. In the first, he refers to those who are poor and wretched in this life; they are the persons who prefer to live on in their wretchedness rather than be annihilated. The second reference is almost identical with the first in meaning. In it Augustine intends to teach that misery in the present life is preferred to non-existence. Neither reference relates to the lost, nor to the lost soul. The nearest Augustine came to Mivart's conception is in that sentence concerning unbaptized infants that die; where he says: "I do not say that it were better for them not to have been born." But he ventures no such sentiment in behalf of adults. Evidently Mivart is theologically out of joint with his own Church respecting the doctrine of future punishment. He seems to incline to a *pæna damni* for all classes of the lost, and to reject the *pæna sensus* altogether. Hell consists only in the loss of the beatific vision.

Enough latitude has been given to determine the range that certain writers in the Catholic Church have taken upon the subject of future punishment in general.

Returning again to infant salvation, we have found that

*"De Civ. Dei," vol. xi., pp. 26, 27; "De Lib. Arbit.," vol. iii., pp. 6, 7, 8. See The Century Magazine, December, 1892.

the decrees of the Council of Trent stand intact in that Church; tho some liberty has been taken in defining them. There seems to be unanimity in this one particular, that there can be no hope entertained for the unbaptized child. While the Council of Trent did not declare itself positively upon this subject, for reasons elsewhere given, yet the whole trend of Catholic doctrine leaves no doubt as to the general belief of the Catholic Church. From first to last there is unanimity upon this also, that the infant is not a spiritual imbecile, that it is spiritually susceptible, and is a proper subject for grace.

CHAPTER IX

INFANT SALVATION AS DEVELOPED BY THE GREAT REFORMATION, AND AS TAUGHT IN THE LUTHERAN CHURCH—
THE MINDS OF THE REFORMERS IN A STATE OF EVOLUTION—UNCERTAINTY AS TO THE FATE OF UNBAPTIZED INFANTS THAT DIED

A TRANSITION period has been reached; old doctrines are about to receive new statements, and, in some instances, new doctrines are to supplant the old. Infant salvation must receive its share of attention, and great changes will follow as a result. Indeed, for centuries there have been gradual changes made in the statements of it, even from the sixth century. From the time that Fulgentius reached the climax of severity concerning the damnation of infants, until the Reformation, great changes were made in the views of their punishment.

Peter Lombard taught that original sin would be punished only with the loss of heaven. De Ales and Aquinas practically accepted this view. For three centuries before the Reformation, both in Italy and in France, the hope was indulged in that in case of the sudden death of an infant the pious intention of the parent would at least be of profit to it. Aquinas even went further; he, with Gerson, hoped that still-born infants might be saved without baptism, through the special interposition of God. This was a great advance. Wyclif entertained a reasonable hope for all infants of pious parents that died without baptism; Walter Brute, a pupil of Wyclif, had no doubt respecting the salvation of all such.

Wessel, tho trained in scholasticism, held a moderate view on this subject. John Huss accepted the pious intention in lieu of baptism. Gabriel Biel, "the last of the schoolmen," taught that it was in accord with God's mercy to seek out some remedy for unbaptized infants. Zwingli believed positively that all infants that died were without exception saved.

The views held upon this subject at the time of the Reformation were therefore more favorable to the unbaptized infant than they had ever been. Many in the ranks of the Catholic clergy hoped that the unbaptized infant would be saved. The trend was toward this view throughout the Western churches of Europe. True, the Council of Trent some years after reasserted the earlier views of Catholicism respecting infant baptism and salvation, but very many of the Catholic clergy were not in sympathy with them. The positive teaching respecting infant damnation which prevailed from the days of Augustine with declining favor till the twelfth century, had given way to a great extent, and milder views obtained. Infant damnation was held in doubt by many, and rejected altogether by some, so that in the fifteenth century Ulric Zwingli could venture to teach that all infants, whether baptized or not, would be saved at death. He held that original sin was more of the nature of a disease, or defect, than of sin, and that baptism was not necessary to remove it.

There was a significant silence upon the subject of infant damnation during the first years of the Reformation; evidently the uncertainty upon that subject was such that the Reformers themselves were not clear in their statement of this doctrine. The reader will be perplexed when he attempts to ascertain exactly what their views were respecting infant damnation. It is true the Latin edition of the Augsburg Confession contains in the concluding sentence of

the ninth article these words: "They condemn the Anabaptists who allow not the baptism of children, and affirm that children are saved without baptism." Here infant damnation is clearly implied. But the German edition omits this latter clause altogether. Why this omission? It was for a purpose. There must have been some doubt in their minds respecting this doctrine, or they would have reasserted it. Again, Melancthon in the Apology * assures us that the promises do not apply to children, "if they be out of the Church of Christ, where there is no gospel or sacrament." How, then, are unbaptized children to be saved?

The Form of Concord also condemns the Anabaptists who teach that infants are righteous and innocent, tho not baptized. And yet, with few exceptions, Lutheran theologians did not teach infant damnation positively; not even Luther himself. This fact will be made clear on a subsequent page. As will then be seen, some taught that the unbaptized infant's fall must not be declared positively, while others taught that it would be saved.

It is evident that the minds of the reformers were not clear upon this. The whole subject of infant salvation as related to unbaptized infants is left undecided. A transition period like that of the Reformation would have demanded superhuman intelligence to have established once for all a clear and perfectly consistent statement of this most perplexing subject. For fourteen centuries the Church had wrestled with it, and at this period the confusion and uncertainty were greater than ever. Baptismal regeneration struggled to hold its ground, while sympathy for the unbaptized infant stoutly contended for some relief.

To bring order and consistency out of such a state as this all at once was, humanly speaking, an impossibility; no

* "Book of Concord," Newmarket edition, p. 142.

reasonable mind could expect it. Luther himself did not regard this doctrine settled to his own satisfaction. In the matter of baptism, which in Lutheran doctrine so nearly concerns infant salvation, he presents no less than three stages. In the first he followed the Augustinian teaching, and distinguished between the sign and what the sign signified. Faith also is necessary to constitute spiritual baptism.

In the second stage Luther taught that baptism is a sign and seal, which must be united with God's Word and promise in order to secure strength and comfort. He who believes and is baptized will be saved. This faith must be maintained.

In the third stage there was added to the sign and Word the command and ordinance of God, and these converted the water into a divine element.* In his catechism Luther says: "It is the water comprehended in God's command and connected with God's command."

It is clear that Luther's mind was in a state of evolution upon one phase of the subject of infant salvation, rather than in one of settled conviction. Melancthon's was in a similar state. They were not prepared to teach infant damnation in the positive manner of the Catholic Church, nor, on the other hand, were they ready to affirm that all unbaptized infants would be saved as Zwingli taught. This undecided state of mind accounts for the somewhat ambiguous and paradoxical statements found in their treatment of the subject of infant salvation in general.

The Marburg Articles, produced October 3, 1529, and signed by Luther, Melancthon, Zwingli, Ecolampadius, and other leading theologians, are the ones out of which the Augsburg Confession finally grew. In the fourth of these articles Luther says: "Original sin would condemn all men who came from Adam, and would separate them forever

*"Erlangen Ausgabe," vol. xvi., p. 63; see Schaff-Herzog's Cyclo.

from God, had not Jesus Christ became our representative, and taken upon Himself this sin, and all sins which follow upon it, and by His sufferings made satisfaction therefor, and thus utterly removed and annulled them in Himself, as is clearly taught in regard to this sin in Psalm li. and Rom. v."

He afterward used similar language in his comment on John xv: 22 in a marginal note, in which he says in substance, that "no one will be condemned on account of original sin, except he will not forsake it." The inference is: all infants are saved that die.

Yet in the eleventh article of the Augsburg Confession we read that, "Original sin condemns all those under the eternal wrath of God who are not born again by baptism and the Holy Spirit."

These statements are calculated to confuse the casual reader. They are paradoxical, to say the least. The Confession says: "Respecting baptism, it is taught that it is necessary; that grace is offered through it; and that children ought to be baptized, who through such baptism are presented to God, and become pleasing to Him."

The Smaller Catechism says: "It [baptism] effects the forgiveness of sins; delivers from death and the devil; and confers everlasting salvation upon all who believe it, as the Word and promises of God declare."

Luther believed that the infant had faith, therefore baptism conferred salvation upon it. In his Larger Catechism he says: "Which [baptism] not only signifies this new life, but also works, begins, and exercises it."

The logical conclusion then of such teaching is that baptism is essential to the salvation of the infant.

Yet in 1542 Luther denounced the practise of baptizing still-born infants, and instructed the parents of such to kneel and in faith pray that God will make this unbaptized

child partaker in His sufferings and death, and then not doubt the answer to such prayer, but believe that God has heard it and gladly received the child according to His own Word, "Suffer little children to come unto me, and forbid them not, for of such is the kingdom of God." "Then should we hold that the little child, tho it has not obtained baptism, is not on that account lost." Both Dr. S. S. Schmucker and Dr. C. P. Krauth refer to this particular passage to prove that Luther did not believe that baptism was essential to the salvation of such infants.

Dr. S. Sprecher in his "Holman" lecture upon original sin also assures us that the confessors "do not mean that unbaptized infants are lost." Yet it is true that the eleventh and ninth articles of the Confession are couched in such language that they have been interpreted by some as teaching the damnation of unbaptized infants; while many of the older theologians have been undecided in their views respecting their fate.

Hoffman (1727), who, having written an admirable treatise on the Confession, is regarded as an authority, says: "It does not follow from these words [not born again of baptism] that *all children of unbelievers* born out of the Church are lost. Still less is such an inference true of the unbaptized infants of Christians." Some such may be lost, but not all.

Fuerlin says: "We are either to suspend our judgment or adopt the milder opinion [that unbaptized infants will be saved]."

Hutter, in answer to the question, "Is baptism necessary to salvation?" replies: "It is, and that because of God's command. For whatever God has instituted and commanded is to be done; is precious, useful, and necessary, tho as to its outward form, it be viler than a straw."*

* Per Dr. Krauth, *Evangelical Review*, vol. xvii., p. 355.

Even Melancthon, in the "Apology," holds that the divine "promises do not apply to these [children], if they be out of the Church where there is no gospel nor sacrament." Yet in later editions of the Confession, in order to explain himself more fully, he altered the ninth article so that it reads: "Of baptism, they teach that it is necessary to salvation, as a ceremony instituted of Christ."

So far, then, as revealed, he would have it understood that the unbaptized infant can not be saved. God may have other ways not revealed by which He will save it. Such teaching leaves room also for the intention of the parent.

This by no means settles the difficulty; it only reveals more clearly to our minds the fact that the confessors were undecided, and that there is lack of harmony and of settled belief as to the fate of the unbaptized infant. Their minds were in a state of evolution. Their great reverence for the divine word, as they understood it, prevented them declaring themselves positively for infant damnation, nor yet could they affirm that all or any infants that died unbaptized would be saved. It is an agnostic position respecting one feature of infant salvation, namely, that of infant damnation. The confessors were positive that all the baptized infants would be saved. They entertained no uncertain views respecting baptism itself. Saving grace surely attended it in the case of infants, but unbaptized infants, who were left without any of the means of grace and who died outside the Church, might be saved. Yet as no way was revealed, the confessors did not venture, as Zwingli did, to teach that such infants would be saved. Original sin, the Confessors believed, was the barrier; with Zwingli this did not stand in the way.

CHAPTER X

DIFFERENT VIEWS AS TO THE FATE OF UNBAPTIZED INFANTS THAT DIED—BAPTISMAL REGENERATION NOT TAUGHT IN THE LUTHERAN CHURCH—SHE DOES NOT HOLD THAT GRACE MUST WAIT FOR BAPTISM

THIS uncertainty on the part of the confessors regarding the fate of unbaptized infants has led to different views regarding the damnation of such infants. Where the fate of so many myriads of helpless infants is at stake, it must needs awaken the sympathy of all reflecting minds; there should be no rest until some plausible way of escape is found for these hapless little ones, who through no fault of theirs fail of baptism. Many find a partial refuge for infants through a *limbus infantum* or a *pœna damni*, where only the loss of heaven is sustained, and where this loss is not fully realized by them. Others dare to affirm that God will save infants in some manner not revealed, and with good Scriptural reason, for did not Jesus say: "Of such is the kingdom of heaven"? Even if He did not tell us the way, yet we have the assurance in these words that the blessed end will be accomplished. Sympathetic hearts must find some way to rescue these little ones, even if we have to combat a rigid orthodoxy which insists that baptism alone can initiate saving grace, or that grace must wait for baptism.

As the Confessors left the damnation of unbaptized infants an open question, the result of it is seen in the fact that among Lutheran theologians there have been no less

than four distinct classes of teachers upon this phase of the subject.

The first class teach that only baptized infants are saved. Calovius stands at the head of this class, with Buddeus and a few others. The second do not venture an opinion either way. As nothing is clearly revealed respecting the means by which unbaptized infants are saved, these teachers prefer to remain agnostics upon the subject. The third class are inclined to accept the old doctrine of intention, and to hope that the unbaptized infants of Christian parents will be saved; that in lieu of baptism the prayers and pious intentions of parents will prevail. Luther seems to have belonged to this class. Bugenhagen, who next to Melancthon was Luther's most active and efficient coadjutor, wrote: "Rather should we believe that the prayers of pious parents, or of the Church, are graciously heard, and that these children are received by God into His favor and eternal life."

Hoffman, of Tübingen, says concerning the latter clause of the second article of the Confession: "It does not follow from these words [not born again of baptism] that all children of unbelievers, born out of the Church, are lost. Still less is such an inference true of the unbaptized infants of Christians."

Hoffman does not rest with this, but adds: "On the question whether the infants of the heathen nations are lost, most of our theologians prefer to suspend judgment. To affirm that they are lost could not be done without rashness." *

Tho this view is of an agnostic character, yet it shows a decided inclination in favor of the salvation of heathen infants.

Fuerlin writes in the same doubtful manner: "In regard to the infants of unbelievers, we are either to suspend our

* See Krauth's article on Baptism, in *Evangelical Review*, p. 357.

judgments or adopt the milder opinion in view of the universality of the grace of Christ, which can be applied to them by some extraordinary mode of regeneration."

Dr. C. P. Krauth says: "On the more difficult question, whether infants born out of the Church are saved, many of our old divines, of the strictest school, have maintained that it would be harsh and cruel to give over absolutely to condemnation the infants of pagans for the lack of that which it was impossible for them to have. This view has been defended at large by Dannhauer, Hulsemann, Scherzer, J. A. Osiander, Wagner, Musæus, Cotta, Spener, and very many others. Some of our best theologians, who have not considered the argument on either side as decisive, have suspended their judgment in the case, as did Gerhard, Calixtus, Meisner, Baldwin, Bechman, and others."*

The above quotations are sufficient to prove that there were those who took an agnostic position respecting the damnation of unbaptized infants, as well as those who believed the intention and prayers of Christian parents would be sufficient to save children.

But there is a fourth class of Lutheran theologians who take a more hopeful view of this subject, and teach that all infants will be saved. Cotta assigns six reasons for this belief: 1. The infinite pity of God. 2. The extent of the Atonement. 3. The analogy of faith. 4. Not the absence of baptism but the contempt of it condemns. 5. God can save the infant in an extraordinary manner. 6. The original sin in itself is a sufficient cause of damnation, yet God's infinite mercy will prevent its actual infliction.†

Knapp says emphatically: "None have ever really doubted respecting the salvation of those who have died in

* Evangelical Review, 1866, p. 358; see also, "Infant Salvation," p. 30, Dr. Warfield.

† C. P. Krauth, Baptism, in Evangelical Review, 1866, p. 359.

infancy before attaining the use of understanding. For since there is a future life, we may expect with certainty that God will make such provision there that both children, in the literal sense, and those who are children in understanding and knowledge, will be able to obtain what on earth they were deprived of without their own fault, and that in His goodness, wisdom, and justice He will bestow upon such infants that degree of happiness of which they are capable."* This is sweeping; the author leaves no doubt concerning his own view.

Stier, author of the commentary on "The Words of the Lord Jesus," says: "The want of baptism, on the part of little children, does not condemn them. The opinions as to the perdition of unbaptized children which were current, but which are scarcely to be found now in evangelical churches, spring from the utmost confusion and misapprehension of all that belongs to the question. The little children whom the Lord calls to die, He calls by their death (as we are in the habit of saying) most surely and effectually to come unto Himself."†

Dr. Krauth says: "Our Church still cherishes the most blessed assurance, in the very existence of infant baptism, that in some other way God's wisdom and tenderness will reach and redeem them [those cut off from the reception of His grace by its ordinary channel—baptism]."‡

Dr. S. S. Schmucker and Dr. S. Sprecher agree with Dr. C. P. Krauth. In fact, with few exceptions, the Lutheran view respecting the fate of unbaptized infants who died has ranged from that of damnation, a belief held by a few theologians, to the salvation of all, a belief held by many.

At the present time, it is safe to say with Stier, concern-

*"Christian Theology," p. 423; Wood's translation.

† Vol. iii., pp. 831, 832.

‡ Evangelical Review, 1866, p. 349.

ing the Lutheran Church: "The opinions respecting the perdition of unbaptized children are scarcely to be found." That which was in doubt, even long after the Reformation, has, in the process of evolution, reached a practically unanimous opinion—not at the expense of baptism, for it must, and ever will, retain its prominence as a sacrament in the Lutheran system. But this position has been reached because the Scriptures demand it; it has been reached not so much by any direct declaration as by the fact that examples have been given of infants who were regenerated even before they were born; the Savior blessed them, and said: "Of such is the kingdom of heaven." Other things may have contributed to this change also.

Now that the history of infant salvation in the Lutheran Church has been traced to the present time, and we have seen that it has advanced step by step from teaching the damnation of unbaptized infants to upholding the salvation of all, baptized and unbaptized, let us see whether the last position can be reconciled with the doctrine of baptismal regeneration, which still retains its place as a doctrine in the Lutheran Church. Must not baptismal regeneration surrender its proper claims to this latter view of infant salvation? Can both stand intact?

That we may reach a conclusion, it will be necessary to know the meaning of baptismal regeneration as taught in the Lutheran Church. The doctrine finds its origin in what is known as the sacramental system of theology, which lays especial stress upon the sacraments in the same way as the Calvinists do upon election. The Catholic Church represents the extreme view; the Lutheran, the conservative, since in it the Word of God is superior to the sacraments as a means of grace. The Catholic Church exalts the sacraments above the Word. Baptism initiates saving grace in the subject, and the soul is dependent upon

it for regeneration. This baptism confers by its own power, *ex opere operato*, independent of faith in the subject, and therefore independent of the Word; all that is necessary is that the intention of the priest shall be in harmony with the will of the Church when he administers the sacrament.

The Lutheran doctrine holds that the Word is the principal thing in the sacrament, and that without it the water would remain mere water; that the Word and the Spirit are inseparable, and therefore the Holy Spirit is present to regenerate the soul in baptism, which it can do, independent of the intention of the one who administers baptism. It rejects the *ex opere operato* of the Catholic Church, and insists upon faith in the subject. Luther even asserts that infants have faith, that they should be baptized, and that through such baptism the guilt of original sin alone is removed, while original sin itself remains. In addition to this, regenerating grace is initiated into the soul of the infant.

This, in brief, is baptismal regeneration, as taught in the Lutheran Church. For proof, it is only necessary to cite some authorities.

The Augsburg Confession says: "Our churches teach that this innate disease and original sin is truly sin, and condemneth all those under the eternal wrath of God, *who are not born again by baptism and the Holy Spirit.*"* "Our adversaries approve the ninth article, in which we confess that *baptism is necessary to salvation*, and that the baptism of infants is not fruitless, but essential and salutary."†

"What does baptism confer or benefit?" Answer: "It effects the forgiveness of sins, delivers from death and *the devil*, and confers everlasting salvation upon all who be-

* Augsburg Confession, Article II.

† "Apology to the Augsburg Confession," p. 141.

lieve it, as the words and promises of God declare.”* Here the twofold effect of regeneration is taught: forgiveness of sin and everlasting life.

But it may be objected that regeneration does not apply to infants, because it only confers these great blessings upon those “*who believe*”; the inference being that infants can not believe; therefore the Catechism does not teach baptismal regeneration for infants.

But in his Larger Catechism Luther says that children do believe: “For, even if children believe not, *which, however, is not the fact* (as now shown), the baptism would still be right,” etc.† He also says: “*The greatest virtue of baptism* does not depend on the circumstance whether the person baptized believe or disbelieve.”‡

In his Larger Catechism Luther says that baptism “not only signifies this new life, *but also works, begins, and exercises it.*” This is even more than regeneration, because it not only begins, but exercises the new life.

Again Luther says: “Thus we should view baptism, and make it useful to ourselves. . . . Now, since both the water and the Word constitute one baptism, it follows that both body and soul must also be saved and live eternally; the soul through the Word in which it believes; the body, however, because it is united with the soul, and also apprehends baptism, as it is able to apprehend it. For this reason we have nothing more precious in our bodies and souls; *for through baptism we become holy and felicitous—a condition which otherwise no course of life, no works on earth can attain.*” §

Fourteen years after the publication of certain symbolical books, the Visitation Articles were written to explain the true import of the former works, and we find under art.

* Smaller Catechism.

† Book of Concord, p. 443.

‡ *Idem*, p. 442.

§ *Idem*, p. 441.

iii., sec. 2: "By baptism, as the laver of regeneration, and the renewing of the Holy Ghost, God saves us, and works in us such righteousness and purification from sin that he who perseveres in this covenant, and confidence unto the end, shall not be lost, but has eternal life."

Baptism regenerates. Sec. 3: "All who are baptized in Christ Jesus . . . have put on Christ."

Sec. 4: Baptism is a laver of regeneration, because in it we are born anew, and are sealed, and favored with the spirit of adoption."

These same articles condemn the Calvinists because they teach: 1. "Baptism is an outward water-bath, which signifies an inward ablution from sins, but does not effect it." 2. "Baptism does not give, or effect regeneration, faith, the grace of God, and salvation, but it only denotes and seals them." 3. "Not all who are baptized with water obtain by it the grace of Christ, or the gift of faith, but only the elect." 4. "Regeneration takes place not in and with baptism, but first afterward in mature years, and in some even in very old age."*

This Calvinistic view is rejected. It can not be denied that the Augsburg Confession, and indeed all the symbols of the Lutheran Church, teach baptismal regeneration. Luther's works are strongly in favor of this doctrine. His comment on Gal. iii: 27, his sermon on baptism (vol. xxii., p. 139), and other references, as in vol. xii., p. 339, leave no doubts concerning his views relating to this doctrine.

Melanchthon practically agreed with Luther. Tho the two differed upon other subjects, they were at one on this. The fact also that the Form of Concord, which was intended to reconcile the Lutherans and the Crypto Calvinists, as the followers of Melanchthon were called, had nothing to reconcile concerning baptismal regeneration, is evidence enough

* Book of Concord, pp. 686, 688.

that there was no dispute between these reformers or their respective followings regarding it.

It would be easy to furnish proof that this doctrine has been taught in the Lutheran Church to some extent ever since the Reformation. Quotations from a few theologians of prominence will be given to prove this.

Ægidius Hunnius, recognized as one of the first theologians of his day, says: "The sacrament of baptism is a spiritual action instituted and ordained by Christ, by the performance of which a man is baptized with water, in the name of the Father, and the Son, and the Holy Ghost; and by means of which he receives *forgiveness of sins*, is received into God's covenant of mercy, and is made partaker of the merits of Christ, of *adoption*, and of *eternal salvation*." *

He also says: "Baptism is not a sign of regeneration that is to take place some time after baptism had been administered to him. For as baptism causes regeneration, it can not be said to signify the same." † In reference to children he also says: "Nevertheless we have seen it to be the will of God that they [children] should enter the kingdom of heaven, and it therefore becomes indispensably necessary for them to be regenerated. But *this regeneration is brought about by no other means than by baptism*, which we know to be the washing of regeneration and the renewing of the Holy Ghost." ‡

Dr. Gerhart, noted as a poet and theologian, says: "The Holy Trinity is present with His grace [in baptism]. The Father receives the baptized person into favor; the Son bestows His righteousness upon him; and the Holy Spirit *regenerates and renews* him, produces faith, regeneration, and renovation, and seals the covenant of grace in the hearts of the baptized." §

* Gottheil's translation, p. 187. † *Idem*, p. 188.

‡ *Idem*, p. 193.

§ *Loc. Com.*, vol. iv., p. 260.

Dr. Buddeus, of Halle, says: "The design of the baptism of infants is their *regeneration*."*

Stier, who holds that baptism is necessary for the infant that lives, and not for the one that dies, is the first writer to compromise the doctrine of regeneration. He says: "Indeed, *full* regeneration . . . can not by any means be predicated of infant baptism; not, indeed, to any such extent as it may coincide in the case of adults with the reception of the water. But a living principle, and a commencement tending to that full regeneration, it does involve, in spite of all contradiction and confusion of opinion."† While not full, yet spiritual life is begun.

There is no need of more proof upon this point; it is clear that the Lutheran creed accepts the doctrine of baptismal regeneration.

In what form does the Lutheran Church hold this doctrine of baptismal regeneration? This, after all, is the question of prime importance, and must determine the force of the doctrine. The time and care bestowed in investigating this will well repay one who seeks to understand this subject properly. Does the Lutheran Church hold the doctrine of baptismal regeneration in a modified compromised form? If she does, does it affect the integrity of the doctrine itself so as to destroy it? Or does she hold baptismal regeneration as an integral part of her system which must stand or fall with it? Is her system so completely sacramental that she must perforce accept the doctrine as taught in the Catholic and the Greek Church? So it would seem, if the opinion of one not unfriendly to the Lutheran Church and yet an accredited authority on all such subjects is to be accepted. This writer says: "The Lutheran creed retains substantially the Catholic view of baptismal

* "Theologia Dogmatica," p. 1127.

† "Words of Jesus," vol. iii., p. 818.

regeneration.”* This deserves and shall receive careful investigation.

At the outset let it be known that the Catholic Church is clear, concise, and very positive in her declarations upon this subject; there is nothing equivocal or uncertain in her position. This can not be said of the declarations of the Lutheran Church; there are some of these declarations which are clear enough in one place, yet in another they are modified so as to becloud the doctrine; they puzzle the student, and are paradoxical, to say the least. There is a marked contrast in this respect between the Catholic and Lutheran doctrine of baptismal regeneration; this will appear as progress is made.

The Lutheran doctrine respecting the effect of baptism is not as clear as it might be. Take two statements of Luther from his Larger Catechism: Under the caption “Of Holy Baptism,” he says: “*In the third place,*” etc., “without faith, baptism benefits us nothing, altho in itself it is a divine, superabundant treasure. Upon these few words, ‘*He that believeth,*’ therefore depends so much,” etc. Then under “Infant Baptism” he apparently contradicts this and says: “Here we further assert that the greatest virtue of baptism does not depend on the circumstance whether the person baptized *believe or disbelieve*; for baptism does not become wrong from this circumstance, but it *depends entirely upon the word and command of God.*” These two are paradoxical, if not contradictory.†

Stier says: “Luther himself, firm as he was in his conviction as to infant baptism, wavered in setting forth its grounds; sometimes he speaks with perfect correctness about it.” Stier instances Luther’s sermon on holy bap-

* Dr. Schaff, “Creeds of Christendom,” vol. i., p. 379.

† Book of Concord, pp. 440, 442.

tism,* in which he says that there are those who insist on faith in the subject about to be baptized. Luther writes: "They think . . . that the Word and water are a sacrament, as far as those who receive them have faith; thus they ground baptism not upon God's ordinance, but upon men's, as if the Word, with the water, was not effectual to baptism before our faith is added (at once in the administration), and thus God's Word and work must receive their efficacy, *first of all*, from us." Then Stier adds: "But he does not hold this fast in its true meanings; he *often contradicts himself*, so that all his writings together, and, indeed, all the writings of the first witnesses of the Reformation, fail to give us the elements of a sound doctrine concerning baptism and infant baptism."†

The same author adds, "That our Lutheran theology has failed to exhibit clearly and establish fundamentally this positive effect of baptism in regard to children, is a thing that can not be denied."‡

All this will appear, it is believed, in a clearer light ere long. For the present, it will suffice to say that there is not that positive statement in the Lutheran doctrine respecting baptismal regeneration, as it pertains to infants, that is to be found in the Catholic Church. There is, to say the least, a "*substantial difference*" between the two in some respects.

There is something more which is calculated to cast doubt upon Dr. Schaff's declaration that the Lutheran Creed retains substantially the Catholic view of baptismal regeneration, namely: the semi-Pelagian view respecting original sin entertained by the latter, and the Augustinian view of it by the former.

* Walch, vol. x., p. 2518.

† "Words of the Lord Jesus," vol. iii., pp. 807, 808.

‡ *Idem*, p. 807.

The Catholic Church teaches: 1. That the fall of man simply deprived him of original righteousness, and left him with concupiscence which is innocent and not sinful, but which is not restrained or guided as before the fall. 2. The consequences after death to the infant are not such as will bring positive punishment, simply *pœna damni*, or punishment which consists only in the loss of heaven (*limbus infantum*). 3. The effect of baptism upon infants is such as to restore them to their original righteousness. The natural concupiscence having never become sinful, remains innocent, and after baptism has a righteous inclination. 4. The Catholic Church teaches that there is no salvation for the infant dying without baptism.

From each of these positions the Lutheran Church dissents. 1. It teaches that all infants are born depraved; that this inherent disease and natural depravity is evil; that this concupiscence is not innocent, but sinful from the beginning. 2. After death this depravity, except the infant be born again by baptism and the Holy Ghost, causes eternal death, and this would certainly be the lot of all unbaptized infants if God had not provided some other way to save them, which we are warranted in believing, in view of what the Savior said and did concerning infants when on earth. 3. The Lutheran Church teaches that the infant is born again by baptism and the Holy Ghost, as does also the Catholic Church; but it furthermore teaches that baptism only remits the guilt of original sin and does not destroy the sinful nature that remains; and that its concupiscence also is still sinful. "The old vicious nature in the flesh and blood still adheres to man, in which there are so many impediments and obstacles with which we are opposed."

We find then in these three particulars concerning original sin that there is a radical difference between the two

creeds. Upon the doctrine of original sin and the effect of baptism, therefore, the Lutheran Church can not "substantially retain the Catholic view of baptismal regeneration." The one creed leaves the infant after baptism without any evil nature and with a holy inclination; the other merely removes the guilt of original sin, and leaves the infant, tho born again, with a nature that is inclined to evil; its concupiscence is sinful, and is to be governed by "daily sorrow and repentance."

The Catholic view saves only those infants that are baptized; all others that die are consigned to a dreary limbo eternally. The Lutheran saves the baptized infant, but ventures to hope, and even to believe, that God has some other way besides baptism by which He will save the unbaptized infant when it dies.

The manner in which and the agencies through which baptism regenerates infants as taught in the two creeds make it impossible that the two views upon baptismal regeneration should be "substantially the same."

The Catholic Church teaches that the Church is the sole dispenser of grace, and that the right intention of the priest is a necessary prerequisite in order to secure a proper result. Then grace is conferred by baptism *ex opere operato*. Consequently the Catholic Church finds the efficacy in baptism independent of the state of the subject. It magically confers grace always to all persons, and under all circumstances and conditions.

The Lutheran Church does not take into consideration the intention of the one who administers baptism, but simply insists that such baptism be properly administered, the water and the Word constituting a true sacrament whereby the Holy Spirit is present to confer grace. In addition to the divinely appointed means, there is presupposed in the infant and adult a proper condition of soul which will uti-

lize the grace of baptism by an active life of penitence and faith. "He that believeth and is baptized shall be saved." Grace is not conferred *ex opere operato*; there is no magical power in baptism to confer it; the subject must believe.

Tho both creeds teach baptismal regeneration, it certainly can not correctly be said that they are substantially the same in their views upon this subject. Both the manner of the operation and the agencies employed therein make the effect of regeneration in either case so different that agreement is impossible. It is therefore denied that these two churches retain "substantially the same view of baptismal regeneration," since they differ so radically in regard to original sin, the fate of the unbaptized infant, and the effect of baptism upon the baptized infant.

Is there no substantial difference between the magical *ex opere operato* effect of baptism and the effect wrought by baptism through the power of the Holy Spirit upon a proper subject? Is there no difference between a doctrine that finds its virtue in the right intention of an officiating priest and one that relies upon the divinely appointed means, the promise of the Word of God, and the belief of the subject? Is there no substantial difference between a doctrine which consigns all unbaptized infants that die to a dreary limbo, and one that holds baptism to be only an ordinary necessity, and in its absence ventures to teach that God will, in some other way, save the dead infant? Certainly, they are not substantially the same.

But this is not all; stronger proof, if possible, yet remains to convince one that the Lutheran Church does not retain substantially the views of the Catholic Church upon this vital doctrine. There are two cognate doctrines which the Catholic Church accepts, but which the Lutheran Church has never received without exceptions and modifications, such as practically set baptismal regeneration aside alto-

gether. Unless there is substantial agreement upon these two cognate doctrines, it is not possible that there should be agreement upon baptismal regeneration.

It will be necessary to notice each doctrine separately. The first may be briefly stated as follows: "Regenerating grace waits for baptism." The Catholic Church teaches that baptism is "the sacrament of regeneration"; that it initiates grace; without it grace must wait.

This doctrine the Lutheran Church has never accepted heartily. True, Dr. Gerhart says: "Baptism is the first gateway of grace, the sacrament of initiation."*

The Augsburg Confession says: "Children ought to be baptized, who through baptism are presented to God and become acceptable to Him."

Hunnius says: "It is the will of God that they [children] should enter the kingdom of heaven, and it therefore becomes indispensably necessary for them to be regenerated. But this regeneration is brought about by no other means than by baptism, which we know to be the washing of regeneration and the renewing of the Holy Ghost."†

Baptism is "the first gateway of grace, the sacrament of initiation." Through it children are presented and become acceptable to God; children must be regenerated to enter heaven, but this regeneration is brought about only by baptism.

These statements are as clear and as positive as any the Catholic Church has produced upon this subject; as sound on the doctrine of baptismal regeneration, and if adhered to without equivocation or exception, there would be no doubt as to the writer's meaning. The statement of Dr. Schaff that the Lutheran Church retains practically the

* *Loc. Com.*, vol. ix., page 67, per "Lutheran Symbols," Dr. Schmucker.

† "Epitome Credendorum," Gottheil's translation, p. 193.

Catholic view upon this subject would be substantially correct after all.

But what are we to believe when we find other declarations from these authors that surrender this cognate doctrine, "grace waits for baptism"; that set it aside, except only in such instances where baptism is received? Such an instance is the following: We have seen that in the case of still-born infants Luther taught that prayer alone was sufficient to save them. Bugenhagen, whose main object in his exposition of Psalm xxix. was "to give consolation in regard to unbaptized children," sets this view over against what he styles "the shameful error drawn not from God's Word, but from man's dreams, that such children are lost." This view "Luther indorses." Bugenhagen then adds: "This shall we assuredly believe: that Christ receives the child."*

Hoffman, in his exposition of the Augsburg Confession, says: "It does not follow from these words [not born again of baptism] that all children of unbelievers born out of the Church are lost. Still less is such an inference true of the unbaptized infants of Christians. For altho regeneration is ordinarily wrought in infants by baptism, yet it may be wrought *extraordinarily* by an operation of the Holy Spirit without means, which the Augsburg Confession does not deny in these words. It merely desires to teach the absolute necessity of the new birth or regeneration and the ordinary necessity of baptism."† Such doctrine would never be accepted by the Catholic Church—it is in direct conflict with its doctrines; hence there can be no substantial agreement in regard to baptismal regeneration itself, since in the Catholic Church grace always waits for baptism.

Fuerlin says: "In regard to the infants of unbelievers

* C. P. Krauth on Baptism, in *Evangelical Review*, 1886, p. 357.

† *Idem*, pp. 357, 358.

(who can not be baptized), we are either to suspend our judgment or adopt the milder opinion in view of the universality of the grace of Christ, which can be applied to them by some *extraordinary mode of regeneration.*" *

Dr. Krauth says: "Many an old divine of the strictest school has maintained that it would be harsh and cruel to give over absolutely to condemnation the infants of pagans, for the lack of that [baptism] which it was impossible for them to have. Some of our best theologians . . . have suspended their judgment in the case." †

Cotta says: "Not the absence, but the contempt of baptism condemns."

It is clear that there is no harmony between the Catholic and the Lutheran creed upon the doctrine that grace waits for baptism. The one makes no exceptions. Baptism is a *sine qua non*; its necessity is unconditional and absolute. While the Lutheran theology is full of exceptions, it not only rejects the doctrine that grace waits for baptism, but, by these exceptions, it practically annuls even the doctrine of baptismal regeneration itself, as will be seen later. True, Gerhart says: "Baptism is the gateway of grace, the sacrament of initiation"; but even he quotes Hunnius approvingly as saying, "That the infants of pagans are saved outside the Church. . . . I would not dare to affirm on the one side or on the other that those little ones, without distinction, are lost." ‡

The approval of this agnostic position is fatal to his positive declaration that "baptism is the gateway of grace, the sacrament of initiation." So are all those quotations already given embodying the following ideas:

1. "Regeneration by baptism is the revealed order to

* *Evangelical Review*, 1886, p. 358.

† *Idem*, p. 358.

‡ *Idem*, p. 358.

which God binds us, but it does not bind God; hence in case of death He can save the infant in some extraordinary way which He has not revealed."

2. "It is not the unavoidable deprivation of baptism, but the contempt of it that condemns."

3. "God may have some other way of regenerating infants that die."

4. "The Confessors speak only of the revealed method; therefore to heathen infants and others incapable of receiving baptism, their language does not apply. They do not intend to teach that unbaptized infants may not be regenerated also."

5. "Tho ordinarily regeneration is wrought by baptism in infants, yet it may be wrought by God in some extraordinary operation of the Spirit without the means."

6. "The article in the Confession on baptism is only intended to teach the absolute necessity of regeneration and the ordinary necessity of baptism."

If these exceptions are sound, then there is but little left of the doctrine that grace waits for baptism, since the exceptions embrace a far greater number of infants than are reached by baptism. The heathen infants, and those of unbelievers that die unbaptized, out of each generation far outnumber those that die after baptism. If all these are saved, it practically annihilates the doctrine that grace waits for baptism, because in all such cases grace does not wait for it, but for death instead.

Furthermore, you have subjected regenerating grace to the act of baptism on the one hand, and a mere emergency—death—on the other; both of them only probable events—uncertainties. This is demeaning it, and makes regenerating grace the tool of circumstance instantly responding to the beck and call of every accident, epidemic, distemper, or disease that culminates in death. To subject saving

grace even to baptism is subjecting the free, all-pervading, and ever-present to the casual, uncertain, and often to the impossible. This is contrary to reason, because it is divine wisdom subjecting the greater to the less; but to go farther and venture to subject regenerating grace to emergencies is to bring the theory into contempt. It is not conceivable or possible that God would bind regenerating grace to such conditions. It is idle to talk of "extraordinary ways" and "other ways," in case the death of unbaptized infants makes them necessary.

Such surmises practically overthrow the doctrine that grace waits for baptism. In proportion as you compromise the doctrine that grace waits for baptism, in the same proportion you must compromise that of baptismal regeneration, since its whole strength depends upon the fact that regenerating grace has no other avenue to the soul than baptism. By saving the unbaptized infants that die you overthrow the rule that baptism is either essential or necessary, since the exceptions to it vastly outnumber those under the rule; in fact, the exceptions become the rule. Necessarily baptismal regeneration loses its prestige and baptismal grace takes its place. On this account it can not be correctly charged that "the Lutheran Church retains substantially the Catholic view upon baptismal regeneration."

If the Lutheran creed retains substantially the Catholic view of baptismal regeneration, then it must also retain substantially the same view of a second cognate doctrine, namely, that of infant damnation. All infants that die without baptism are lost, says Rome. Her semi-Pelagian view of original sin will suffer her to spare them from the full *pœna sensus* view of punishment, but none escape the *limbus infantum*.

If the Lutheran Church accepts the doctrine of infant

damnation, her views of original sin being so much stronger than the Catholic position, the lost infant must suffer *pœna sensus*, a severer penalty than the *limbus infantum* of the Catholic Church.

CHAPTER XI

DOES THE LUTHERAN CHURCH TEACH INFANT DAMNATION?
IF NOT, SHE DOES NOT TEACH BAPTISMAL REGENERATION

DR. SCHAFF says: "The Lutheran creed limits infant salvation to those who enjoy this means of grace [*i.e.* baptism]." * Then, of course, if this authority is correct, the Lutheran Church teaches that the unbaptized infant that dies must be damned. But with the exception of Calovius, Buddeus, and a few others, no Lutheran theologians have taught this doctrine positively.

Both Dr. Charles P. Krauth and Dr. S. S. Schmucker quote Luther's words to the parents whose child died unbaptized. After instructing them to pray earnestly for the child, he tells them: "Then should we hold that the little child, tho it has not obtained baptism, is not on that account lost." †

Dr. Schmucker says: "Luther coincided in this opinion [that infants having no unbelief will be saved], and maintained that unbaptized children would not be lost." Then he quotes as above from the German of Walch's edition of Luther's works. ‡

Bugenhagen styles infant damnation, "The shameful error, drawn not from God's Word, but from man's dreams."

* "Creeds of Christendom," vol. i., p. 379.

† Evangelical Review, 1866, p. 356.

‡ Vol. x., p. 2616.

After instructing the parents to pray for the child that can not be baptized, he adds: "This shall we assuredly believe, that Christ receives the child, and we should not commit it to the secret judgment of God; to do this is to despise the promises in regard to little children."*

Luther and Bugenhagen insisted upon giving unbaptized infants a Christian burial. "We bury them as Christians; confessing thereby that we believe the strong assurance of Christ." "The bodies of these [unbaptized] children have part in the joyous resurrection—resurrection of life." Dr. Krauth then adds: "Gerhart, and all our theologians, so far as we are aware, without an exception, present and argue for the same views."†

Hoffman said: "It does not follow that all children of unbelievers, born out of the Church, are lost. Still less is such an inference true of the unbaptized infants of Christians. . . . On the question whether the infants of the heathen nations are lost, most of our theologians prefer to suspend their judgment. To affirm as a certain thing that they are lost could not be done without rashness."‡

Dr. Krauth says: "Many of our old divines of the strictest school have maintained that it would be harsh and cruel to give over absolutely to condemnation the infants of pagans, for the lack of that which it was impossible for them to have. Such writers as Dannhauer, Hulsemann, Scherzer, J. A. Osiander, Wagner, Musæus, Spener, and many others were of this opinion." Dr. Krauth also says: "Some of our best theologians who have not considered the argument on either side as decisive have suspended their judgment in the case, as did Gerhart, Calixtus, Meisner, Baldwin, Bechman, and others." Hoffman and Hunnius were also of this number; while Cotta, Knapp, and many

* C. P. Krauth on Baptism, 1866, in *Evangelical Review*, p. 357.

† *Idem*, p. 357.

‡ *Idem*, p. 358.

later theologians speak with confidence respecting the salvation of all infants that die.*

Stier, author of the "Words of the Lord Jesus," says: "The want of baptism on the part of little children does not condemn them. The opinions as to the perdition of unbaptized children, which once were current but are scarcely to be found now in evangelical churches, spring from the utmost confusion and misapprehension of all that belongs to the question. The little children whom the Lord calls to die He calls by their death (as we are in the habit of saying) most surely and effectually to come unto Himself."† This writer regards baptism as necessary for infants that will live to grow up, but not necessary to save those that die.

A theologian whose views are considered orthodox by Lutherans says, concerning infants that die: "When, then, in the mysterious providence of this lover of these precious little ones, they are cut off from the reception of His grace by its ordinary channel, our Church still cherishes the most blessed assurance, in the very existence of infant baptism, that in *some other way* God's wisdom and tenderness will reach and redeem them. . . . In the green valley and along the still waters of the visible Church, God has made rich provision for these poor, sin-stricken lambs; because He has a fold into which He gathers them out of the bleak world, therefore do we believe that if one of them faint, ere the earthly hands which act for Christ can bring it to the fold and pasture, the Great Shepherd, in His own blessed person, will bear it the food and the water necessary to nurture its undying life, and take it into the fold on high."‡

* "Knapp, "Christian Theology," p. 423; Wood's translation.

† "Words of Jesus," vol. iii., pp. 831, 832.

‡ C. P. Krauth, *Evangelical Review*, 1866, p. 349.

Another theologian whose ability and knowledge of this subject will not be questioned, bears this testimony respecting the fate of unbaptized infants: "They [the Confessors] do not mean that unbaptized infants are lost; they speak only of God's revealed order, and while they do say that He binds us to this order, they do not imply that He binds Himself by it. They had not forgotten that John the Baptist was filled with the Holy Ghost from his mother's womb; that the dying thief entered unbaptized into Paradise; that when Jesus had said, 'He that believeth and is baptized shall be saved,' He added not, he that believeth not and is not baptized shall be damned; but simply, 'He that believeth not shall be damned'; that He said, 'Except ye be converted and become as little children, ye can not enter the kingdom of God'; that 'it is not the will of the Father that one of these little ones should perish.' Not the unavoidable deprivation of baptism, but the wilful neglect of it condemns. Nor is the doctrine of some so-called Old Lutherans of our day, that the faith which precedes baptism is not yet saving, in accordance with the views of these first Lutherans in the early days of the Reformation. I need not say, therefore, that the Confessors do not mean that God has no other way or means of regeneration except those expressed in the Bible; or that unbaptized infants, from the mere absence or want of baptism, are unregenerated, and, dying in infancy, are unprepared for heaven. . . . To subjects who have not the Gospel, or are incapable of receiving it, this declaration does not refer. For aught it teaches, all infants, baptized or unbaptized, may be regenerated or saved; they are regenerated and saved by the grace of God alone."*

We are safe now in saying that "the Lutheran creed does

* Evangelical Review, 1867, pp. 579, 580; Dr. Sprecher's Holman Lecture on Original Sin.

not limit infant salvation to those who enjoy this means of grace [baptism]." From an agnostic position respecting infant damnation the Lutheran Church has advanced to one that teaches the salvation of all infants that die, whether baptized or not. Infant damnation never was a doctrine of the Church in a positive sense with but few exceptions; salvation of all infants that die is now held as positive by all.

How, then, can it be said that the "Lutheran Church retains substantially the Catholic doctrine of baptismal regeneration" when she rejects its cognate—infant damnation? Her views respecting original sin; the effect of baptism; the salvation of all infants that die; also her doctrine that grace does not wait for baptism, prove conclusively that she does not. Dr. Schaff is certainly in error. The two creeds, Catholic and Lutheran, do not retain substantially the same view of baptismal regeneration.

Upon what, then, does Dr. Schaff base such a declaration? It is not to be supposed that one with his profound scholarship would make such a declaration without good ground for it. What, then, is that ground? It is found in his own words: "Those churches which hold to the necessity of baptismal regeneration must either consistently exclude from heaven all unbaptized infants, or, yielding to the instincts of Christian charity, must make exceptions so innumerable that these, in fact, would become the rule, and overthrow the principle altogether."*

Baptismal regeneration as a doctrine establishes the ground upon which Dr. Schaff makes his charge. The truth is, it has metes and bounds which must be respected. Transgress these and the doctrine vanishes. When you by exceptions save all unbaptized infants that die, then you save a far greater number than are saved by baptism.

*"Creeds of Christendom," vol. i., pp. 379, 380.

You dwarf the principle, in fact destroy it. This is the case as baptismal regeneration is now taught in the Lutheran Church. But this is not all: the cognate doctrines must be taught if baptismal regeneration is accepted. For example, the two doctrines—(1) “grace waits for baptism” and (2) infant damnation—must stand or fall with it. It is idle to claim that you can retain the doctrine of baptismal regeneration and yet ignore or reject these two cognates. Yet this is precisely what the Lutheran Church has done with ever-increasing confidence. The term baptismal regeneration means nothing unless it is that, through baptism as its main channel, regenerating grace first reaches the soul. It may submit to a few exceptions—as, for instance, when the pious parent has failed to secure baptism for the child before it died—but the exceptions must be few. The great mass of infants that fail of baptism must be left to their deplorable fate. Neither the mercy of God nor the tenderest sympathies of the human breast are entitled to the least respect in determining one’s belief as to their fate, so long as the doctrine of baptismal regeneration is entertained; it takes precedence, and prescribes what you must believe. It alone is to be consulted, and its demands, even to the minutest details, must be granted. Loyalty to it requires that not only the abstract doctrine be preached, but that for the sake of a dependent, helpless regenerating grace, it should be carefully and constantly kept before the hearer as the prime handmaid of regeneration, the only “initial gateway” of saving grace to the soul.

To affirm that the infants of unbelievers and heathen may be saved without baptism is treason to this doctrine. To presume that regenerating grace should have any other avenue of approach to the infant soul is rank heresy. And to believe that Jesus’s words, “of such is the kingdom of heaven,” could be applied to any but baptized infants, is

“wresting the Scripture to your own destruction.” In order, then, that the doctrine be properly understood, it is necessary to believe that the regenerating grace of God is subjected to baptism—must wait for it; also that unbaptized infants are lost. No one has any right to affirm his belief in baptismal regeneration except he agrees to these propositions, and in no uncertain manner. Away with any doubt respecting it! Out with the hope that the unbaptized infant will be saved! It is also disloyalty to teach that baptism is only an “ordinary,” not an “absolute necessity”; that “baptism binds man, but not God”; also that there is “some other way,” or “some extraordinary way,” that “original sin damns no infant soul since Christ died,” etc.

These explanations overthrow baptismal regeneration; they completely supplant it as a fundamental doctrine. If these are correct, then grace does not wait for it; its prestige is lost. All infants can be saved without it, and none are damned.

Thus the Lutheran Church must retain the doctrine of baptismal regeneration and hold to infant damnation substantially as does the Catholic Church, or surrender it altogether. As now taught by her, it is a myth. This, without doubt, is the reason that Dr. Schaff says: “The Lutheran Church limits infant salvation to those who enjoy this means of grace [baptism].”

It is folly to attempt to gainsay this, since the doctrine must compel grace to wait for it. It must retain its commanding position in order to preserve itself. Its right to a place in theology depends upon this. It must control regenerating grace, at least for infants. It may be that in the case of adults who can actively believe and to whom active faith is possible, you could teach that baptism is only an ordinary necessity, and still preserve the doctrine from annihilation, but in the case of infants you can not so

teach; to them it is absolutely essential; it can not accommodate itself to one's sympathy; it is as relentless as fate. Regenerating grace itself is subordinated and must await its summons. Even the doctrine of intention can scarcely secure its recognition without robbing it of its divine right. What, then, is the result when you dare to teach that all infants who die unbaptized are saved? Not a vestige of baptismal regeneration remains.

CHAPTER XII

BAPTISMAL REGENERATION NOT ESSENTIAL TO BAPTISM AS A SACRAMENT—BRIEF SUMMARY OF LUTHERAN DOCTRINE CONCERNING INFANT SALVATION

THE prime feature of baptism is that it is a channel for grace. Would not grace find it a better channel if it did not have to wait for the act of baptism than if it did? Baptismal regeneration obstructs this channel because it compels regenerating grace to wait for it. The first step in saving grace can not be taken without it. Therefore instead of being an advantage it is an obstruction. Myriads of infants can not be saved, because it compels grace to wait for it. Certainly the sacrament of baptism will prove a far better channel without it than with it. Grace is not, then, arbitrarily tied to the act of baptism, but is free to initiate itself into the infant soul independent of it. Then if we remove this obstruction the sacrament of baptism will, instead of losing any of its true dignity or importance, gain immensely. Instead of a barrier to grace it becomes one of its important channels.

But some may contend that if you deprive baptism of regenerating grace you rob it of its choicest jewel. Not so; the grace that follows regeneration is no less precious or essential. The truth is, it is the same grace. Baptism confers grace without doubt, and therefore it is robbed of nothing that legitimately belongs to it. Let not baptism be deprived of anything that will dignify it as a sacrament. The fact that it has been commanded and instituted by

Christ is enough to establish it. The fact that it is a chosen purveyor of divine grace is proven from its union with the divine Word and the Holy Spirit. The command to baptize and to be baptized is as positive as any of those in the Decalog, or even in the Word of God. Nothing but presumption would dispute its authority or deny it its place among the appointed channels and means of grace. That it confers grace upon the infant and adult is both implied and taught. Let none abate one jot or tittle of its importance lest "God should take away his part out of the book of life, and out of the holy city, and from the things which are written in this book."

In eliminating from baptism the doctrine of baptismal regeneration, however, no harm is done it. On the other hand, it is relieved of an encumbrance which can well be spared. Article ix. of the Augsburg Confession does not teach that baptism initiates grace; it rather evades this doctrine, for it says: "Respecting baptism it is taught that it is necessary; that grace is offered through it; and that children ought to be baptized, who through such baptism are presented to God, and become pleasing to Him." This will permit one to teach that the infant may be a subject of grace before it is baptized. Considering the times in which it was written, and the purposes intended, this article is remarkable for the latitude it allows. It not only does not teach baptismal regeneration positively, but in a sense evades it, and permits a broader view of baptism. Thus Hoffman (1727), "who wrote," says Dr. Krauth, "one of the most admirable of the older expositions of the Confession," remarked upon article ii., "On Original Sin," that, "It does not follow from these words, 'not born again of baptism,' that all children of unbelievers born out of the Church are lost—still less is such an inference true of the unbaptized infants of Christians. For, altho regeneration

is ordinarily wrought in infants by baptism, yet it may be wrought extraordinarily by an operation of the Spirit without means, which the Augsburg Confession does not deny in these words. It merely desires to teach the absolute necessity of the new birth, or regeneration, and the ordinary necessity of baptism." *

Does he not admit in this that the Augsburg Confession in article ix., or, for that matter, in article ii. also, does not bind one to the doctrine of baptismal regeneration, but allows latitude? Many infants that die without baptism may be saved. They may be regenerated "extraordinarily by an operation of the Spirit without means." This is conceding that the Augsburg Confession does not teach baptismal regeneration unconditionally; it allows latitude.

Many before Hoffman's time, and multitudes of Lutheran theologians since, have gone to much greater lengths and taught that the Confession did not teach infant damnation, neither for the infants of unbelievers nor for heathen; but permitted one to believe that all of them are saved.

Quotations from Luther, Bugenhagen, and others have been given to prove that from the first the Confession was construed very liberally. This liberality has grown, until now the Lutheran Church accepts the belief that all infants are saved after death.

From these facts it is safe to conclude that the doctrine of baptismal regeneration is not essential to baptism as a sacrament; the sacrament is complete without it.

It is now time to summarize the history of infant salvation in the Lutheran Church. Her theology in its beginning was not clear upon the subject; its statements were paradoxical if not contradictory. She never taught substantially the Roman Catholic doctrine of baptismal regeneration, nor that unbaptized infants that died were lost.

* Krauth, *Evangelical Review*, pp. 357, 358.

Gradually the belief in the salvation of this class dawned upon her theologians, until at present it is the universal belief in Germany and America. This change in views upon this subject is not peculiar to Lutheran theology, but is characteristic of nearly all the prominent schools of the Protestant Church.

The fact that the Lutheran Church does not regard the infant as a spiritual imbecile deserves to be noted. Though helpless through depravity, yet it is within the reach of saving grace, through the use of the means of grace, and that grace can survive until it is expelled by actual sin.

In this, Lutheran theology is in harmony with the view of the Christian Church in all the centuries preceding the great Reformation. The infant is not a spiritual imbecile.

CHAPTER XIII

AMERICAN LUTHERANISM — ALLEGED ABUSES OF THE LUTHERAN DOCTRINE

THE type of Lutherism which resulted in a recension, and found its symbolic expression in the Definite Synodical Platform, was called by way of distinction or reproach "American Lutheranism." Facts were furnished showing that Melancthon, in order to placate the Catholic dignitaries, had changed the Augsburg Confession from day to day even up to the hour of its delivery; also that Luther himself affirmed that "*he had yielded too much to the Papists in some particulars,*" and that he and his coadjutors had also changed their views afterward on the mass and other subjects. It was also shown that in later years such men as "Doederlein, Morus, Michaelis, Reinhard, Knapp, Storr, Schott, Schwartz, Augusti, Marheinecke, as well as Hahn, Olshausen, Tholuck, and Hengstenberg, had abandoned the doctrines of the symbols."

To foster this recension the pietistic influence from Halle and the revival of the eighteenth century under the Wesleys, Whitefield, Edwards, the Tennants, and others, contributed greatly. Whitefield preached in some of the Lutheran pulpits of America. Prayer-meetings were among the means employed to promote piety. Revival services were held by some Lutheran pastors. They often came into close contact with other denominations. New life was infused into the Church. The General Synod under this energy became a possibility. But the recension enthu-

siasm did not reach its culmination until it produced "the Definite Synodical Platform." We have only to deal with it so far as it relates to the subject of infant salvation, namely, the second article of the platform—"Natural Depravity"—also the ninth, "Concerning Baptism." In article ii. it omits the clause, "*and condemneth all those under the eternal wrath of God who are not born again by baptism and the Holy Spirit.*" *

It rejects the doctrine of "baptismal regeneration" even as an ordinary necessity. In explanation of this rejection, Dr. S. S. Schmucker says: "Of régénération in the proper sense of the term, infants are incapable; for it consists in a radical change in our religious views of the divine character, law, etc.; a change in our religious feelings and in our religious purposes and habits of action; of none of which are children capable." †

The same author denies that regeneration is possible for infants, because they have not "that increased predisposition to sin arising from action"; the change of which is the main work of regeneration, therefore they can not be regenerated "in the proper sense of the term." The grace conferred by baptism (as Luther claimed) is not regeneration proper; it consists in a radical change in our views of God "and in our religious purposes and habits of action." He does not even admit that the infant is capable of an objective regeneration. This if true would decree the infant to be a spiritual incapable, which is clearly unscriptural. He says that baptism in infants is simply "the pledge of the bestowment of those blessings purchased by Christ for all." ‡

Dr. Schmucker's strong pietistic tendencies led him to

* See Def. Synod. Platform.

† "American Lutheranism Vindicated," p. 145.

‡ *Idem*, pp. 145, 146.

dread anything that savored of baptismal regeneration. He did not stand alone in this. Goering had written: "I hate the doctrine that baptism is regeneration with all my soul. It is the hobby-horse of unconverted ministers on which they ride to perdition. . . . Baptism is not regeneration, but a means of regeneration, a means by which God effects or bestows it." *

Dr. Schmucker makes no distinction between baptism as an ordinary requirement and as an absolute necessity; nor does he accept the theory that none can be saved without it. Upon this point he may have accepted the more liberal Lutheran views. One who has been a life-long advocate of pietistic Lutheranism says: "I need not say, therefore, that the Confessors do not mean that God has no other way or means of regeneration except those revealed in the Bible, or that unbaptized infants, from the mere absence or want of baptism, are unregenerated, and, dying in infancy, are unprepared for heaven. They speak only of the revealed order of salvation, the way into which the Gospel calls us, and in which those who hear the Gospel have the only sure warrant and certain pledge of regeneration. To subjects who have not the Gospel, or are incapable of receiving it, this declaration does not refer. For aught it teaches, all infants, baptized or unbaptized, may be regenerated and saved. But if regenerated and saved, they are regenerated and saved by the grace of God alone." †

It has of late years been virtually conceded that the Definite Synodical Platform does not correctly set forth the doctrines of the Augsburg Confession respecting original sin and baptism, and hence it has been practically abandoned. The abuses which have been regarded as the necessary results of error in the Augsburg Confession respect-

* "Lutheran Manual," by Dr. Schmucker, p. 139.

† Dr. S. Sprecher's Holman Lecture on Original Sin, 1867.

ing baptism are now looked upon as the result of errors in other directions. Certain abuses in themselves are not a criterion from which to judge the soundness or unsoundness of a confession, since any and all systems of doctrine are liable to them. There is no system that is safe in the hands of negligent custodians. Stier, whose life-long devotion to the Lutheran Church and whose superior advantages enabled him to investigate and understand the origin of those abuses, says: "We feel and bewail as much as any secret or open opponent of infant baptism can do, the lowering and perversion of the sacrament in the present state of things, the unnurtured growing up of baptized children, the groundless reliance upon baptism on the part of some, the undervaluation of the mere ceremony on the part of others—in short, the deplorable condition generally into which the Church in these matters has fallen. But all this mischief is not, as its opponents assert, to be imputed to infant baptism since its introduction; it has rather been produced in spite of it by other circumstances. The remedy for these evils is not to be found in the removal of the *foundation of grace* upon which this fallen Church still rests, and the abolition of that baptism which is the real channel for the communication to children of the life of grace." *

It is safe to say that no system of doctrine will be free from abuses in the hands of unfaithful or incompetent men. We do err greatly when we charge the blame upon the doctrine rather than upon its custodians. It is doubtful whether any other existing system could have withstood all the tests peculiar to the times, and overcome more difficulties or have been productive of more blessed results than has the Lutheran.

While we see abuses springing out of the unfaithful

*" Infant Baptism," vol. iii., p. 817.

training of the baptized children, we must not shut our eyes to the fact that, if possible, a greater abuse has grown out of that system which adheres rigidly to revival methods, and relies entirely upon special services to secure the regeneration of souls. Followers of this system ignore the fact that the infant is not a spiritual imbecile, that the tender years of childhood are the most hopeful for piety; yea, they more than ignore these, for they practically teach that the child must stand aloof until such time as it may be reached by the revival method. This, however, is not an abuse which necessarily inheres in the revival method, but one which is very likely to grow out of it, and has done so wherever that method has obtained. Yet who that has realized the blessed results of a genuine work of grace would for a moment decry the revival because of these abuses?

Have not abuses also grown out of the doctrine that baptism is merely "a pledge, or sign, or seal of a righteousness to be hereafter attained"? In attempting to avoid what was regarded as an extreme on one hand, advocates of this phase of the doctrine have gone to the opposite one. Those who look for error only in one direction will not be likely to suspect it in the other. Those afraid of claiming too much for baptism are by the natural inclination of such fear sure to claim too little and then suspect no evil in that, and yet it may be as fruitful of evil as the other extreme. In fact, the doctrine that regards baptism as an ordinary necessity and requires the child to be carefully trained to live a life of repentance and faith from its early years to old age is not to be feared so much as is the one which suffers parents to look upon their offspring as not having been dedicated to God in childhood and as too young to be trained in the fear of the Lord. Stier says: "If the evangelical Church would begin diligently to point the baptized to the privileges and obligations of their baptism, and to take all

pains with the fundamental religious education of those who are growing up; if institutions were to be established which should seek and strive to save those who are groveling in sin and ignorance; . . . then would it appear far beyond expectation how much of the germ of regeneration is still present among the people derived from their baptism and only waiting for discipline and nurture." *

It certainly ought not to be presumed that "the seed of regeneration," as Stier calls it, should be capable of self-germination and self-development. Baptismal grace does not assume that; but, on the other hand, demands the most careful culture for the child. This fact borne in mind, the doctrine that grace is conferred in baptism, instead of being an injury will be productive of incalculable blessing.

We need but cite in proof the Lutheran churches in Denmark, Sweden, and Norway, and from those parts of the fatherland not influenced by rationalism. If we are to judge from the class of immigrants which comes from these countries to America, we must conclude that its system of religious training and doctrine has been most effective. Churches, colleges, and orphan asylums spring up in their wake. Their zeal for the cause of Christ seems only limited by their necessities. The Macedonians who were commended for their liberality by St. Paul seem to be equaled in generosity by these zealous Christians of foreign birth. Certainly nowhere have the blessed fruits of the Gospel been more abundant than here. We need no better evidence than this to prove the advantages of infant baptism and early training. The work of "reaching the masses" is not an unsolved problem among these people. They are reached, and so effectively that a journey of three thousand miles, and the privations incident to poverty, to a new and unsettled country, and a strange language, do not de-

* "Infant Baptism," vol. iii., p. 817.

stroy their devotion. Indeed, it may be said that there have been in the past no extensive revivals of a substantial character, except those which gathered their converts from among those who had been baptized in infancy and received early Christian nurture.

Instead of grace beginning its work in the soul first in the revival, it was begun at a much earlier stage. Then it had been strengthened by baptism and fostered by early training so that in time of revival it simply entered upon a higher stage of spiritual life. This previous work made that of the revival far more effective than it otherwise could have been. It was simply a revival of life already begun—a revival in the true sense of the word.

If American Lutheranism had aimed its efforts at the correction of the abuses which had come upon the Church, the fruit of its labors would certainly have proven more abundant. The extreme stand it at first took has been modified, so that now it occupies a more conservative position, tho it firmly adheres to revival methods for the restoration of the backslidden and for the conversion and regeneration of the impenitent.

Even tho American Lutheranism is not so radical and aggressive as in former years, its piety and devotion are as active and sincere as ever. The monuments of its energy and self-sacrifice are seen in the General Synod which it founded; in the colleges and missions, both home and foreign, which it has established. All things considered, no better evidence of true piety and energy can be furnished anywhere.

CHAPTER XIV

INFANT SALVATION IN THE REFORMED CHURCHES—GERMAN REFORMED AND PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH

ZWINGLI, the Swiss reformer, took a more liberal position upon this subject than any who preceded him. If Ariminensis was called "the severe father of infants," Zwingli can be justly styled their gentle father. He did not, with Calvin, make the election dominate everything, nor with Augustine make the Church and baptism essentials to salvation. With him saving grace was not bound by election; and infants who died without baptism were saved. He inclined to the belief that all children dying in infancy belonged to the elect, and their early death was an evidence of this. He even believed that all infants are in some manner saved from sin and its eternal consequences. The words of Paul (1 Cor. xv: 22), "As in Adam all die, even so in Christ shall all be made alive," he interpreted as teaching this, else they could not be true; therefore it is wrong to account the dead heathen infants among the lost. The atonement and the election of God secures the salvation of these, as well as of the children of pious parents.

The absence of faith in infants was no ground for their condemnation, since the election secured them and in due time produced faith in them. Original sin was rather a natural defect, or a moral disease, than a punishable sin; they are healed of this by Christ, and having never been guilty of actual transgression, they must be saved. This was the farthest remove possible from the Roman Catholic

doctrine—no salvation out of the visible Church. It was too positive even for Luther at first, for then he did not venture to more than hope that there might be some other way besides baptism for the salvation of those infants who died without baptism. Zwingli also utterly discarded the *pœna sensus* theory of Augustine, the *limbus infantum* of the Roman Catholic Church, and the “middle state” of the Greek Church.

The Reformed Church itself modified the views of Zwingli in some important particulars. The Heidelberg Catechism, published first in 1563, more than thirty years after his death, is the symbol of its faith, and is the only standard of doctrine. Its critics tell us that it embodies two distinct theological tendencies: one Melancthonian and the other Calvinistic; or, stating them with more care, one “is Christological, sacramental, churchly, and conservative. The other, presupposing the sovereign will of God as the determining principle of Christianity, is in sympathy with intellectualistic, unsacramental, and unchurchly views.”*

This latter Calvinistic feature was regarded at Dortrecht as thoroughly supralapsarian, so that the Heidelberg Catechism was cordially indorsed by that Synod in 1618. The other more sacramental and churchly element, however, has ever predominated in this denomination.

The (German) Reformed Church itself has never affirmed this supralapsarian feature as a ruling principle; but the French, Dutch, Scotch, and other branches of it have to a greater or less extent done so. “The Melancthonian element” has predominated among the Germans and their descendants. In January, 1863, a tercentenary celebration was held in Philadelphia in honor of the three hundredth anniversary of the Heidelberg Catechism. A committee

* E. V. Gerhart, D.D., McClintock and Strong’s Cyclopedia, vol. iii., p. 827.

was appointed the following year (1864) to digest the proceedings of this celebration and present its conclusions to the Eastern Synod for adoption. It will be necessary to refer to a very small part of this report, as the subject in hand has reference to but a few features of it concerning election. "It denies that there is a twofold eternal decree, electing some unto salvation and others unto damnation." It *"affirms* that the election of grace unto life is effectual in and by the established economy of grace."*

The election is effective for salvation only through the faithful use of the means of grace, and is not, as in pure Calvinism, independent of them. Infants, therefore, are to be regarded among the elect if baptized. This is Augustine's view of election.

Concerning baptism, this digest or report says: "Holy baptism is a divine transaction wherein the subject is washed with the blood and Spirit of Christ from all pollution of his sins as certainly as he is washed outwardly with water; that is, he is renewed by the Holy Ghost, and sanctified to be a member of Christ, that so he may more and more die unto sin and lead a holy and unblamable life."†

Regeneration attends baptism and may be said to wait for it, but it is not effected by the water or the intention of the priest, but by the blood and Spirit of Christ with the water as a mere outward sign. The Augsburg Confession says grace is offered through baptism. The water and the Word contain the Holy Spirit, which is the effective agent. The result is precisely the same, and the same life of faith is required of such baptized ones, the Lutheran insisting upon "penitence" as a prime feature of that after-life, and the Reformed on a "holy and unblamable life." A vol-

* McClintock and Strong's Cyclopedia, vol. iii., p. 827.

† See the eleventh section of report.

ume entitled "The Tercentenary Monument" contains the essays and sermons delivered during this celebration, to which reference has already been made.

After quoting the prayer used at the baptism of children, one of the essays in this volume says: "In this prayer the fact is recognized that through baptism the child has received the forgiveness of sins, has been received as a member of Christ, made the child of God; all of which has been sealed and confirmed to it by holy baptism."*

Respecting the force of the word "mystery" in the baptismal service this author in a foot-note says: "This of itself speaks volumes, and is satisfactory evidence that its view of the sacrament is fairly beyond the reach of any scheme which makes it merely confirmatory of a grace already received or promissory of one to be received in future."† That is, the bestowment of grace through baptism is initial and immediate, and this grace he styles "sacramental grace."‡

Another writer who participated at this celebration says: "Through holy baptism God breathes into the lower covenanted being the breath of life, and a new spiritual creature is formed. . . . It not only imparts remission of sin, breaks the power of original depravity, but also gives a positive spiritual life, which relates the child really to the atonement of Jesus Christ and through this to the quiescent, justifying will of God, to be exerted in an active way in its case at a more advanced stage of its maturity."§

The same writer says: "The grace, then, which the covenanted child receives in the sacrament of holy baptism is that which gives it a living relation to Christ, the Church,

* Dr. Harbaugh, "Creed and Cultus," "Tercentenary Monument," p. 249.

† *Idem*, p. 246.

‡ *Idem*, p. 252.

§ Rev. D. Gans, "Tercentenary Monument," pp. 458, 459.

and the Holy Ghost."* It is needless to quote at length, as the trend of the whole essay is consistent with the quotations given.

This same author starts with the infant before it is born and claims for it, if born of pious parents, negative virtues, because it is born under covenant relations; but by baptism the negative rises to the degree of positive holiness. There is also an organic union between it and the parent, so that holy baptism finds personal and active faith in its behalf, since its parents and the Church possess it. Such faith by virtue of this union becomes the faith of the child and baptism its own act of consecration. This consecration, however, presupposes careful Christian nurture and the use of the means of grace, that the life begun may be developed "from strength to strength, until at last he shall be filled with all the fulness of God."

It has been noted by the reader that infants born of pious parents are by that fact already in covenant relations with God; "They inherit the physical, intellectual, and moral natures of the parents . . . and in some peculiar sense, their gracious nature; thus they belong to the covenant and to the people of God."†

But the infants of unbelievers and heathen can sustain no such relation; to them this system offers not a ray of hope. Their parents being unbelievers or heathen, they can not by birth be children of the covenant; they inherit no negative grace, and failing of baptism, can not have the positive grace; hence not regenerated, and if they die in this state must be damned. There seems, so far as the writers consulted are concerned, not to have been room enough for even a conjecture as to the probable salvation of such infants; their case is not considered by them, and we are left to draw our own conclusions. They are lost.

* "Tercentenary Monument," p. 463.

† *Idem*, p. 456.

One is not surprised upon finding even in this school one of its leading theologians taking exceptions to this doctrine and its necessary conclusion that unbaptized infants that die are lost. Under the reactionary movement in theology upon the subject of infant salvation for the last two centuries or more we can expect nothing else. The writer referred to teaches that there will be an opportunity after death for infants to accept or reject Christ, a probationary period which he believes exists between death and the Second Advent. "It is a mistake, therefore," he says, "to regard natural death as the final or decisive event in relation to the eternal condition of infants dying in infancy. . . . The human conditions of spiritual well-being in the trans-earthly period do not differ from the human conditions of spiritual well-being on earth. . . . Infants at the moment of their exit have, by no free act of their own will, embraced either good or evil, and will therefore form a moral and religious character after they have departed this life. Through the preaching of the Gospel there will be a manifestation of the Mediator to all infants dying in infancy; but it can not be positively stated that all these will even after death accept Christ."*

This view practically declares the infant to be spiritually incapable, since it can not by the exercise of its own will accept Christ. The will is the determining factor, not baptism, nor the Holy Spirit, nor the infant's susceptibility. In fact, it has no susceptibility until it is old enough to exercise its own will. Baptism has no saving effect; infants that die must form their moral and religious character after death in the life to come. This is at open war with his own Church and with all Pædobaptists. The infant is not a spiritual imbecile, but is susceptible of spiri-

* Prof. E. V. Gerhart, *Reformed Quarterly Review*, 1884, pp. 14, 15, 16, 43.

tual grace, even of an objective regeneration, before it can exercise the will or actively believe.

This is the voice of the Church in all ages. Dr. Gerhart's theory also practically ignores the Savior's own declaration concerning infants, "Of such is the kingdom of heaven." If a state of probation is necessary, or an act of the will of the infant, then they are not of the kingdom of heaven.

We have in Dr. Gerhart's views another instance of the fact that the doctrine of baptismal regeneration will, if properly accepted, drive some of its advocates to the belief in probation for infants after death. In this instance the Reformed view compels one either to the belief in infant damnation or to that of future probation. The truth is, baptismal regeneration, if accepted at all, must do this wherever and by whomsoever held. It is not surprising that, rather than accept the doctrine that unbaptized infants are lost after death, many theologians will, if not openly, at least tacitly, accept the doctrine of future probation. The extent to which it is held privately can not be known, but if we can determine anything from the silence of the pulpit upon infant damnation, it is wellnigh universal. Few ministers are prepared to advocate probation from the pulpit, and only here and there can you find a theologian who boldly advocates it, but the silence of all the rest is almost as significant as their open advocacy of the doctrine could be.

Dr. Gerhart does not call his views future probation, but it amounts to that. He regards the infant's existence after death as a mere continuance of its earthly state; it will be one of development just as here. Christ will then manifest Himself to it so soon as it is able to understand and exercise its own will. Then it will choose or reject the Savior. It is their own choice rather than their baptism or the want

of it in this life that is to determine their final destiny. He says: "They do not attain to final salvation simply in consequence of their baptism, but because from the heart they receive Him."

Such is the rebound from the doctrine of baptismal regeneration by this eminent professor and theologian of the German Reformed Church.

Evidently the theology taught in the "Tercentenary Monument" is not satisfactory to him so far as infant salvation is concerned. The human mind in this day will not rest until it finds some escape for infants dying without baptism. This view just quoted is as old as the writings of Origen; notwithstanding it has been condemned as unsafe, it has appeared again and again. This time, with some modifications and additions, it is advocated by such writers as Stier, Farrar, Gerhart, and others.

Before dismissing the German Reformed Church, it is important to add that there is a respectable minority bearing its name who dissent from the rigid sacramental doctrines of "The Tercentenary Monument." They are chiefly west of the Alleghanies. Some of these adopt a theory of infant salvation nearly allied with that of the Methodist Church. Others hold the Calvinistic view of decrees; but by those informed it is claimed that the prevailing faith as maintained in the East is gradually extending itself East and West. The Calvinistic and Puritanic features are yielding to the Melancthonian, "from year to year the number of ministers and churches is increasing that stand firmly on the historical churchly and sacramental basis of the Palatinate Catechism."* It is only necessary to call attention to the fact that this Church recognizes the same spiritual capacity and susceptibility in the infant that has been found in the teaching of all the other churches referred to.

* McClintock and Strong's Cyclopedia, vol. iii., p. 830,

The Calvinistic system has found as much difficulty as the Lutheran and Reformed in commending its earlier declarations upon the subject of infant salvation to its theologians of the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries. A great advantage, however, is now claimed for it by Calvinistic writers over what are known as the sacramental systems, because election is held to be independent of water baptism. It is therefore urged that election can be as free as the Holy Spirit itself, which can operate when and where He pleaseth. While those creeds which adhere to the absolute necessity of baptism must exclude the great majority of infants from salvation, whole nations of heathen, besides hosts of the infants of unbelievers, are in consequence left to die without hope. This is the case with Augustinianism and Roman Catholicism. With Augustine baptism preceded election. He, with the Roman and Greek churches, modified the damnation of infants to the smallest punishment possible, but the unbaptized infant could not enter heaven. It is claimed for Calvinism that it can consistently teach with Zwingli and Bullinger the salvation of all infants dying in infancy.*

It is evident from the first century and a half of Calvinism that it was not conceived with a view to such construction or interpretation. Dr. Schaff admits this where he says: "This was, indeed, not the professed Calvinism of Calvin and Beza, nor of the divines of Dort and Westminster; nor of the older divines of New England."† During the first century of Calvinism its advocates were involved in controversy with its opponents. Their writings are voluminous and afford abundant proof that there were non-elect as well as elect infants; and if the former died in infancy damnation awaited them. It will be useless to bur-

* See Dr. Schaff, "Creeds of Christendom," vol. i., p. 794.

† *Idem*, p. 794.

den these pages with numerous or lengthy extracts, since it is not a disputed fact. A few will answer the purpose.

Calvin: "When the Lord rejects him [the godless man] *with his offspring*, there is certainly no expostulation which we can make with God. . . . If He therefore rejects any one, is it not of necessity that such an one's seed should also be accursed? . . . This, therefore, is to be held *for certain*, that all who are deprived of the grace of God are included under the *sentence of eternal death*, whence it follows that *the children of the reprobate*, whom *the curse of God follows*, are subject to the same sentence." *

Among the errors which the fifteen pastors of Geneva—Calvin at the head—accused Servetus as teaching was this one: "He dare condemn none of the [infant] offspring of Ninevites or barbarians to hell, because, in his opinion, a merciful Lord who hath freely taken away the sins of the Godless would never so severely condemn those by whom no Godless act has been committed and who are most innocent images of God." Also Servetus infers that "all who are taken from life as infants and children are exempt from eternal death; tho they be elsewhere called accursed." †

Against Castalio, whose inclinations were contrary to the damnation of infants, Calvin wrote with severity: "You deny that it is lawful for God, except for wilful sin, to condemn any human being. Nevertheless, numberless infants are removed from life. Put forth now your virulence against God, who precipitates into eternal death harmless new-born children torn from their mothers' bosoms. Your masters, Servetus, Pighius, and such like dogs, say at least that before the world was created some were condemned whom God foreknew worthy of destruction. But you will not concede that He devotes to eternal death any, except

* On Isa. xiv: 21, Opera iii.

† "Refutatio Errorum," Michaelis Serveti, Opera, tom. viii., p. 597.

those who for perpetrated evil deeds would be exposed to penalty under earthly judges. . . . You do not hesitate to overturn the whole order of divine justice."*

Beza, a pupil of Calvin, says: "Many thousand infants receive baptism who yet are never regenerated but perish forever" (because not elect). Why all the children "of faithful parents" are not elected, he says, must "be left with God."

At the Synod of Dort, 1618-1619, which evolved its famous "five points of Calvinism," the utterances of the divines in their opposition to Arminianism were of the most positive character. "Infant reprobation and the actual damnation of infants were asserted in manifold shapes, and in all the public discussions of that body; no Calvinist of any land uttered a word of doubt or mitigation. There were points on which differences were expressed; there were feelings aroused which threatened the very continuance of the Synod; but there was a happy harmony in regard to infant reprobation."†

The Arminians, at the twenty-third session, through their champion Episcopius, declared that "all the children of the faithful are sanctified in Christ"; not one perishes; but the Calvinists taught that neither baptism nor the prayers of the Church could save from damnation those who were reprobate infants. This is in keeping with Calvin's reply to Castalio, already quoted; also with the first of the five points of Calvinism set forth at Dort; also with that of God's eternal decree of absolute and unconditional election and reprobation.

The language of the Bremen theologians at Dort does

*"De Occulta Dei Providentia" (1558), Opera, tom. viii., pp. 644, 645.

*C. P. Krauth's "Infant Salvation in the Calvinistic System," p. 55.

not give assurance that all the infants of believers will be saved in case they die. They said: "Believers' infants *alone* who die before they reach the age in which they can receive instruction, *we suppose to be loved of God and served of His . . . good pleasure.*" *

The Belgic professors, three of them, said: "Infants born of *parents not in the covenant*, the Scripture pronounces impure and aliens from the covenant of grace." †

Librand Lubbert, at this synod, is recorded as saying: "There is an election of infants, there is a reprobation of infants. To the infants of the Church belongs the promise; to the others who are out of the Church no promise is made." ‡

The theologians of Great Britain who were at Dort say: "The thesis that there is no election of infants, . . . as if all were indiscriminately saved, is a hypothesis without any foundation whatever to rest on."

The deputies of the synod of South Holland and the theologians from Drenthe report in the same strain. A very recent authority of the Calvinistic school has this to say: "No synod probably ever met which labored under greater temptation to declare that some infants dying in infancy are reprobate than the synod of Dort. Possibly *nearly every member of it held as his private opinion that there are such infants.*" § The italics are ours.

The Westminster Confession of 1647 shall next claim our attention.

This confession carefully avoids the term "reprobation," and substitutes the milder one, "preterition." The verb "predestinate" is employed only with reference to eternal life, while the lost are said to be ordained, or judicially

* Acta Synod., Dordrecht Judic., p. 63.

† *Idem*, p. 10.

‡ *Idem*, p. 20.

§ B. B. Warfield, D.D., "Infant Salvation," pp. 44, 45.

condemned, to death. Yet it says: "God withholds or extends His mercy *as He pleaseth*, for the glory of His sovereign power over His creatures to pass by and to ordain them to dishonor and wrath for their sin to the praise of His glorious justice."* This is reprobation. A reprobate is simply one who is abandoned to sin. When God withholds His mercy reprobacy follows as a necessary consequence, and "to ordain them to dishonor and wrath" certainly completes the work. Under chap. iii., sec. iii. it says: "God has predestinated some men to everlasting life and fore-ordained others to everlasting death." This God did (sec. v.) "according to His eternal and immutable purpose and the *secret* counsel and good pleasure of His will, before the foundation of the world was laid." In sec. vi. it says: "Neither are any other redeemed by Christ effectually called, justified, adopted, sanctified, and saved, but the elect only." In sec. vii.: "The rest of mankind God was pleased . . . to pass by and to ordain them to dishonor and wrath for their sin, to the praise of His glorious justice." †

Under chap. vi., sec. vi. it says: Original sin brings guilt "upon the sinner, whereby he is bound over to the wrath of God and curse of the law, and so made subject to death."

In chap. x., sec. iii. are the words: "Elect infants dying in infancy are regenerated and saved by Christ through the Spirit who worketh when, where, and how He pleaseth." And in sec. iv.: "Others not elected, altho they may be called by the ministry of the Word, and may have some common operations of the Spirit, yet they never truly come unto Christ, and therefore can not be saved." ‡

There is an effort on the part of Westminster to modify

* Chaps. iii., vii.

† See Westminster Confession.

‡ See Westminster Confession.

Dort's severity. But the Calvinistic view of original sin alone binds infants over to the wrath of God. From this there is no possible escape except they are of the elect. The elect alone are regenerated by Christ, through the Spirit who worketh when, where, and how He pleaseth. Friends of the Westminster Confession do not claim that it teaches the salvation of all infants that die, nor, on the other hand, that it teaches they will be lost, since all that die may be elect or not. Its position is an agnostic one. They also claim that "no Reformed Confession enters into this question"; there may be reprobate infants, and there may be none, this is neither affirmed nor denied. Its advocates say that sections i. and iii. of chapter x. do not imply that there are non-elect infants that die; tho it has been often controversially asserted that the history of the formation of these sections proves the error of these controversialists. After all, it can not be denied that the language of the Confession does indirectly convey the impression that there are non-elect infants that die. Sec. iii. says: "Elect infants dying in infancy are regenerated and saved," etc. "So are all other elect persons," etc. Then follows sec. iv. which says: "Others not elected," etc., "can not be saved." To whom does the word "others" refer if not to infants as well as other *non-elect* persons that die, and who "can not be saved"? The language certainly admits of such construction. Only a strained construction of these sections can escape this conclusion.

Furthermore, if the election of infants is made to depend upon their covenant relations, then the number of the non-elect must be very large, since there are so many who are children of unbelievers and heathen. There are certain features in the decretal system which make it the most inflexible of all. For instance, its declarations concerning original sin: the eternal and unchangeable decrees of God

by which He has foreordained a part of the human race without any merit of theirs to eternal salvation, and another part in just punishment of their sins to eternal damnation. Also the utter inability in the means of grace or in the efforts of the non-elect to change the decree that reprobates them. These—angels and men; infants, too—thus predestinated and foreordained, are immutably conditioned, “and their number is so certain and definite that it can not be either increased or diminished.”* All this is predetermined by the *secret counsel* and good pleasure of *the will of God*. The will of man has nothing to do with it. These features are inflexible.

All this is fully sanctioned by the history of Calvinism for its first one hundred years. It is claimed that the Lutheran view of the sacraments is just as inflexible as the Calvinistic one of election, and therefore it necessarily consigns all unbaptized infants that die to hell. There is this, however, in favor of the Lutheran: that Luther himself did not teach the damnation of unbaptized infants, but ventured to hope that God might have some extraordinary way which He has not revealed, by which He could save such infants as failed of baptism; but Calvin did not in his day, nor did any other at the Synod of Dort or at the Westminster Assembly, venture to teach that the election might include all infants that died. Luther was not so positive, he left it open. On the other hand, Calvin and Beza entertain no doubt concerning the damnation of the non-elect; the same is true of Dort.

There is little doubt, however, that there were a few who preferred to the view of Calvin that of Zwingli, and with him believed that all infants that died are elect and saved. But Zwingli's view can not consistently accommodate itself to the Calvinistic doctrine of election, which

* Westminster Confession, chap. iii., sec. 4.

like the law of gravitation is not conditional, but absolute and unconditional; in it "there is neither variableness nor shadow of turning." You could as well expect the deluge to have accommodated itself to unsheltered infants or that the ordinary providences would modify themselves to protect the innocent from the direst famine as to expect that a mere providential contingency like death should in the case of infants annihilate their reprobation. It is not consistent with the doctrine of election to suppose that it would step aside for infancy because of death, or any other emergency; nor can we with reason conclude that God would not suffer any but elect infants to die. When by the secret and predetermined decree of God you dominate the Word, the sacraments, all the means of grace, and even the human will, then it is impossible to believe that any consequences attending election or reprobation could modify it in the least; it is as inflexible as fate. The original decretal system as certainly damned all uncovenanted infants as the sacramental system of Romanism damns all unbaptized ones. Dr. Schaff says that Dr. Hodge's claim that all infants will be saved that die "may be true of the present generation, and we hope it is, tho it is evidently inapplicable to the period of scholastic orthodoxy, both Lutheran and Calvinistic."

It has been the case that all those systems of theology which have excluded helpless infants from heaven have ever found many of their advocates out of harmony with them on this subject. We need not be surprised, therefore, to find this the case with theologians and divines in the Calvinistic churches. Even in Calvin's day such a scholar as Sebastian Castalio ventured to antagonize the doctrine of predestination as it related to infants. Calvin had been dead but a few years when Arminius arose, who, tho a student at Geneva and indoctrinated by Beza in the most

radical Calvinism, became its most powerful antagonist. Later Toplady, Philip Doddridge, and Thomas Scott, with many others down to the present day, have gone so far in modifying the original doctrine as it related to infants that not a vestige of its severity is left. They have not been satisfied with even the agnostic position of Petrus De Wette and others. Not willing to leave the fate of the children of unbelievers and heathen "to the judgment of God," "the agnostic view of the fate of uncovenanted infants dying as such has given place to an ever-growing universality of conviction that these infants, too, are included in the election of grace; so that to-day few Calvinists can be found who do not hold that all who die in infancy are the children of God, and enter at once into His glory."* Dr. Schaff says: "Modern Calvinism, at least in America, has decidedly taken a liberal view of this subject, and freely admits at least the probability of the universal salvation of infants."† Dr. Charles Hodge, of Princeton, teaches positively that all infants dying in infancy will be saved.‡ Indeed, Dr. Hodge's liberality is surprising. "The Scriptures," he says, "nowhere exclude any class of infants, baptized or unbaptized, born in Christian or in heathen lands; of believing or unbelieving parents from the benefits of the redemption of Christ." If all infants receive the benefits of redemption, are they not all elect? And if elect, are they not all sure of salvation, whether they die infants or adults? This must be the case, or that favorite doctrine of Calvinism—the final perseverance of the saints—is at fault. We will not press this further.

The son of Dr. Charles Hodge, Dr. A. A. Hodge, also indorses the same view. At an assembly called several

* Warfield, "Infant Salvation," p. 45.

† "Creeds of Christendom," vol. i., p. 795.

‡ "Systematic Theology," vol. i., p. 26.

years since to meet in New York City to revise the Westminster Confession, the following substitute offered by Dr. Briggs *was adopted*: "Infants dying in infancy . . . who are incapable of being called by the ministry of the Word, are regenerated and saved by Christ through the Spirit which worketh when, where, and how it pleaseth." Tho the complete revision was not finally adopted, it is clear that this would have composed part of it if the other changes had been as acceptable as this. Behold the changes the followers of Calvin have wrought in the doctrine of infant salvation! From the most positive teaching respecting the fate of reprobate infants it gradually became agnostic concerning their future, and would not express itself for or against the salvation of uncovenanted infants. Finally, the agnostic view disappeared, and has given place to "*an ever-growing universality of conviction* that these infants, too" (uncovenanted, dying such), "are included in the election of grace; so that to-day few Calvinists can be found who do not hold with Toplady and Doddridge and Thomas Scott and John Newton and James T. Wilson and Nathan L. Rice and Robert J. Breckenridge, and Robert S. Candlish and Charles Hodge and the whole body of those of recent years whom the Calvinistic churches delight to honor, that all who die in infancy are the children of God, and enter at once into His glory . . . because God in His infinite love has chosen them in Christ, before the foundation of the world, by a loving foreordination of them unto adoption as sons in Jesus Christ."* All that die, covenanted and uncovenanted, are saved.

Behold the successive changes, and that, too, in this most inflexible of theological systems. The inflexibility is all gone, so far as infant salvation is concerned. The author

*"The Development of the Doctrine of Infant Salvation," by Benjamin Warfield, professor in Princeton Seminary, pp. 49, 50.

just quoted with Dr. Schaff claims that all these later changes "are clearly within the limits of the system."

It is clear, therefore, that the Calvinistic system has lost its inflexible character in regard to infants that die. The decrees of election and reprobation have lost their obnoxious features; and now they are made to conform to the whole Word of God. There are passages in the Old and New Testaments which if interpreted by themselves would warrant all the extremes of scholastic Calvinism, and constitute an exegetical Gibraltar—secure, impregnable—but which lose their stern and severe character when interpreted in connection with the whole Word of God,—with such passages for instance, as: "God so loved the world that he gave his only-begotten Son"; "As I live, saith the Lord, I have no pleasure in the death of the wicked, but that the wicked turn," etc.; "This was the true light which lighteth every man that cometh into the world," etc. Nor does the Calvinistic system remain in its severe integrity in the light of such truths as God's infinite love, the freeness and fulness of grace, the all-atoning sacrifice, the incontestable evidences of God's mercy, the universality of the Atonement, man's wilful unbelief as the only revealed ground of condemnation, the sincere desire on God's part that all should repent. These great underlying and determining truths must necessarily so temper Calvinism that to retain the esteem of its followers it must clothe itself in the garb of mercy instead of a stern justice that so nearly resembles vengeance. Those passages upon which Calvinism was originally based may yet be made to harmonize with the general tenor of the Scriptures. The difficulties, however, do not all lie within the Scriptures themselves, for it must be confessed that there are seemingly insurmountable ones in Providence, such as its lavish bestowment of mental, moral, and physical gifts to some,

with only partial and very imperfect ones to others; inequalities more marked often than those suggested by "the ten" and "the one talent." Absolute privation characterizes the condition of millions of heathen, and utter weakness is the lot of the infant hosts. Now for the human brain to solve this problem so as to reconcile all with election and reprobation, this is the task. It is impossible not to admire the courage of those who, in the hope that more light might be thrown upon this difficult problem from election than by other systems, have striven so long and so tenaciously after it. This effort has not been entirely in vain, since it has so modified their creed that theologians are willing to teach that, if not all infants, at least the dead ones, are elect.

CHAPTER XV

INFANT SALVATION IN THE ANGLICAN EPISCOPAL CHURCH— THE QUAKERS—IN THE METHODIST EPISCOPAL CHURCH

It will be found that the Episcopal Church with all the others has changed its doctrines from time to time concerning infant salvation. At first baptism was held to be an absolute necessity for salvation. The Episcopal Church exceeded Luther in this, for he ventured to hope that the infant might be saved without baptism, while the Episcopal equaled in rigor the Augustinian and Roman Catholic doctrine. At the convocation of 1536 "Ten Articles" were sanctioned, which were entitled, "Articles Devised by the King's [Henry VIII.] Highness Majesty to Establish Christian Quietness and Unity among Us." The second of these reads as follows: "That baptism conveys remission of sins and the regenerating grace of the Holy Spirit, and is absolutely necessary as well for children as adults."*

At this convocation several articles were set forth to be preached by the clergy diligently. Those respecting baptism are as follows:

"First, the sacrament of baptism was instituted and ordained in the New Testament by our Savior as a thing necessary for the attainment of everlasting life: 'Except a man be born of water and the Spirit,' etc.

"Second, that it is offered to all men as well as infants, as such as have the use of reason, that by baptism they shall have remission of sins, etc.

* Wall, "Infant Baptism," vol. ii., p. 163.

"Third, that the promise of grace and everlasting life, which promise is adjoined to the sacrament of baptism, pertaineth not only to such as have the reason, but also to infants; . . . they are thereby made the very sons and children of God; insomuch as children dying in their infancy shall undoubtedly be saved thereby, otherwise not.

"Fourth, infants must needs be christened because they are born in original sin, which sin must needs be remitted; which can not be done but by the grace of baptism, whereby they receive the Holy Ghost which exercises His grace and efficacy in them, and cleanses and purifies them from sin by His most secret virtue and operation." *

Tho ostensibly from the Crown, it is supposed that the Ten Articles were prepared by Cranmer, who became to some extent the tool of Henry—so much so, indeed, that he finally sanctioned "the bloody statute," or Six Articles, which was passed in 1539 and which punished with death all those who should adopt the doctrines of the reformers on the points covered by it. Luther's severe castigation of Henry VIII. may have had much to do with this, also with causing him to take such extreme ground upon the subject of infant salvation and against the reformers.

After the death of Henry a change took place. About the year 1550, the writings of Zwingli and Bullinger wrought a decided change in the minds of leading theologians. Thomas Becon (chaplain to Cranmer, and one of the six preachers in Canterbury Cathedral; died 1567) compares infants in his day to Jewish children who were saved without circumcision, and taught that even Turks and heathen may be spiritually baptized and saved without water-baptism. "Besides all these things, what shall we say of God's election? Can the lack of baptism destroy and make of none effect the election of God?" Bishop Jewel says:

* "Infant Baptism," vol. ii., p. 163.

“The grace of God is not tied to any sacraments. He is able to work salvation both with them and without them.” Cranmer, when he revised the liturgy in 1552, instead of inserting the whole sentence—“be received by baptism into the ark of Christ’s Church, and so be saved from perishing”—omits the latter half. Elsewhere he also speaks of the necessity of baptism for infant salvation as a “scrupulous superstition.”*

Thirty years after this another change toward sacramentalism occurs. Richard Hooker says: “Predestination bringeth not to life without the grace of external vocation, wherein our baptism is implied, which both declareth and maketh us Christians, in which respect we justly hold it to be the door of our actual entrance into God’s house; the first apparent beginning of life; a seal perhaps to the grace of election before received, but to our sanctification here; a step that hath not any before it. . . . If Christ Himself, which giveth salvation, do require baptism (Mark xvi:16), it is not for us that look for salvation to sound and examine Him whether unbaptized men may be saved; but seriously to do that which is required, and religiously to fear the dangers which grow by want thereof.”† This is intended as a thrust at Calvinism, as in this same discourse he refers to Calvin’s Institutes. This same writer, while he approves of the sacramental theory, is not disposed to teach, at least in the case of the children of believing parents, that infants will be lost if not baptized, for the reasons “that grace is not absolutely tied unto sacraments”; that “God bindeth no man unto things altogether impossible”; that “there is in their Christian parents and in the Church of God a presumed desire that the sacrament of baptism might be given them,” and that “the seed of faith-

* See Schaff, “Creeds of Christendom,” vol. i., pp. 642, 643.

† *Idem*.

ful parentage is holy from the very birth." His belief is based upon the old baptism-of-intention doctrine, and that of hereditary holiness also.

Bishop John Hooper (1547), who suffered martyrdom under Queen Mary, wrote this respecting the necessity of baptism: "The ungodly opinion that attributeth the salvation of men unto the receiving of the external sacraments, as tho the Holy Spirit could not be carried by faith into the penitent and sorrowful conscience, except it ride always in a chariot and external sacrament," etc.* He with Zwingli taught that all infants dying in infancy, whether children of believers, unbelievers, or heathen, were saved.

After little more than a century the intensely sacramental theory came to the front again. Matthew Scrivener (1674) says: "Death and passion are not communicated unto any, but by outward signs and sacraments"; therefore "either all children must be damned, being unbaptized, or they must have baptism."

Wall, who is a standard authority upon this question and who wrote not long after this [died 1728], says: "The Church of England have declared their sense of its (baptism's) necessity by reciting the saying of our Savior (John iii: 5), both in the office of baptism of infants and also in that for those of riper years. . . . Concerning the everlasting state of an infant that by misfortune dies unbaptized, the Church of England has determined nothing (it were fit that all churches should leave such things to God), save that they forbid the ordinary office for burial to be used for such an one; for that were to determine the point and acknowledge him for a Christian brother. And tho the most noted men in the said Church from time to time, since the reformation of it to this time, have expressed their hopes that God will accept the purpose of the parent for the deed;

* Warfield, "Infant Salvation," p. 34.

yet they have done it modestly and much as Wyclif did, rather not determining the negative than absolutely determining the positive, that such a child shall enter the kingdom of heaven." * This is the agnostic view respecting the future state of unbaptized infants of believing parents only. It affords no direct light upon the condition of the infants of heathen and unbelievers, all those whose parents can not by their own purpose or intention obtain favor for them.

Dr. Schaff, also, is of the opinion that "the Anglican Church . . . leaves the possibility of salvation of all infants that fail of baptism an open question." He thinks also that it has "a strong leaning toward the liberal view"; that such are saved. The probability is, however, that Wall is more correct in the view prevalent at the time he wrote, and that the changes since then warrant the conclusion of Dr. Schaff.† It is absolutely impossible to say just what the doctrine of this Church is at the present time. It is clear, however, that no single view can comprehend the different theories held. There are still many of its clergy who retain the rigid sacramental doctrine, "that the relationship of sonship to God is imparted through baptism, and is not imparted without it."‡ There can be no better proof of the speculative character of this doctrine than its history in the Anglican Church. At one time the doctrine was intensely sacramental, leaving no hope for unbaptized infants. Then it became Zwinglian, with abundant hope for all; then Calvinistic, with hope only for the elect. Afterward moderately sacramental, with reasonable hope for the unbaptized infants of believers on the ground of purpose or intention; not venturing to express an opinion respecting infants of heathen and unbelievers. At another

* "History of Infant Baptism," vol. ii., p. 377.

† See "Creeds of Christendom," vol. i., p. 644.

‡ Oxford Tracts, vol. ii., No. 66; per Warfield,

time it maintained an agnostic position respecting all unbaptized infants. In short, it has been Catholic, then Zwinglian, again Calvinistic, anon Lutheran and Arminian. It is true that at the present time nearly all Protestants are agreed that all infants dying in infancy will be saved, but after all it is a conclusion drawn from the general tenor of Scripture or from the atonement of Christ. It is not one that is settled beyond a doubt or upon a sure basis.

The attention of the reader is again called to the fact that not a Church so far has been found that has regarded the infant as a spiritual imbecile or entirely devoid of spiritual capacity. On the contrary, they have uniformly taught, some that with, others that without, the means of grace infants could be the subjects of saving grace.

Barclay, the principal expounder of Quaker doctrines, has prepared fifteen theological theses, embodying the chief features of their belief. In the fourth of these he says: "All men are by nature fallen, degenerated, and spiritually dead, but hereditary sin is not *imputed* to infants until they make it their own by actual transgression." And in the twelfth he says: "The baptism of infants is a human tradition without Scripture precept or practise."

The Methodist Episcopal Church has encountered difficulties similar to those of other denominations in the effort to arrive at a satisfactory conclusion upon this subject. At the present time it may be said that it is in a speculative state. Dr. Whedon says: "All are agreed that the dying infant is saved by the Atonement." But how is the infant saved by it? It can neither repent nor actively believe; how, then, does the atonement avail for the infant? That is the question, and until answered Scripturally the subject remains in a speculative state. No bald, unsupported statement will answer the purpose.

Upon the doctrine of original sin, this Church does not

take the high ground that the Lutheran and Reformed churches do. The consequences of the fall of Adam are corrupting, and the tendency of that corruption is toward evil, but at the same time they reject the doctrine that Adam's posterity are responsible for his fall, or that they have any original guilt. The universality of divine grace and its prevenience enable it to cancel all the damning power of original sin, so that all dying in infancy are saved; hence all children are saved at death if they die before they commit actual sin. Personal responsibility is necessary first before they can go beyond the reach of saving grace.

While this is the present speculative status respecting infant salvation, it was not so from the beginning. John Wesley, in the beginning of his ministry, held to the doctrine as taught in the Lutheran Church. This is his language: "If infants are guilty of original sin, then they are proper subjects of baptism, seeing in the *ordinary way* they can not be saved unless they be washed by baptism.

"It has already been proved that this original sin cleaves to every child of man, and that hereby they are children of wrath and liable to external damnation. It is true the second Adam found a remedy for the disease which came upon all by the offense of the first; but the benefit of this is to be received through the means which He hath appointed, *through baptism in particular*; which is the ordinary means He hath appointed for that purpose, and to which God hath tied us, tho *He may not have tied Himself*. Indeed, where it can not be had, the case is different; but extraordinary cases do not make void the standing rule. This, therefore, is our first ground. Infants need to be washed from original sin, therefore they are proper subjects of baptism.

"Secondly, if infants are capable of making a covenant, and were and still are under the evangelical covenant, then they have a right to baptism, which is the entering seal thereof. But infants are capable of making a covenant, and were and still are under the evangelical covenant.

"The custom of nations and common reason of mankind prove that infants may enter into a covenant, and may be obliged by compacts made by others in their name, and receive advantage by them; but we have stronger proof than this; even God's own Word (Deut. xxix: 10-12)."

Wesley continues: "Now God would never have made a covenant with little ones if they had not been capable of it. It is not said children only, but little children, the Hebrew word properly signifying infants. And these may be still, as they were of old, obliged to perform in after-time what they are not capable of performing at the time of their entering into that obligation.

"Circumcision as a seal of the covenant has had struck from it the political and ceremonial; and now the seal has been changed to baptism; therefore they have a right to baptism under the everlasting covenant.

"Sixthly, that infants ought to come to Christ, appears from Christ's own words, 'Suffer little children,' etc.

"They brought even infants to him that he might touch them (Luke xviii: 15). So little they had to be brought." *

Curteis quotes Wesley: "It is certain that our Church (the Methodist Episcopal) supposes that all who are baptized in their infancy are at the same time 'born again,' and it is allowed that the whole office for the baptism of infants proceeds upon this supposition." †

Fletcher, one of Wesley's most admired contemporaries,

* "Living Thoughts of John Wesley," by Potts, p. 228.

† Dr. F. W. Conrad, "Baptismal Tract."

“maintained the doctrine of infant justification and regeneration.” *

On the same page from which the above is quoted Dr. Whedon says: “Mr. Wesley’s earlier expressions of opinions indicated a holding of the churchly doctrine of baptismal regeneration.” Luther himself only claimed that baptism was an ordinary necessity, and that grace was conferred by it. Luther also said that God may not have tied Himself to baptism as a means. This is Mr. Wesley’s view. His position respecting unbaptized infants is also an agnostic one, as was Luther’s. But Dr. Whedon says: “His [Wesley’s] later indications of opinion indicate that he held all infants to be members of the kingdom of heaven; and he also held that regeneration is a condition to membership in the kingdom of heaven, but he does not expressly draw the inference that all infants are regenerate.”

One of the standard theologians of the Methodist Church expresses his views in this wise upon this perplexing subject: “Nothing that circumcision either signed or sealed under the Old Economy can be lost under the New; therefore children have their privileges in the Christian covenant sealed to them in their baptism. Accordingly they are addressed as members by the Church in every epistle. If it be asked what is the blessing sealed to them, the answer is: all that they are capable of receiving. As children of a race under condemnation they are justified freely by His grace through the redemption that is in Christ Jesus. Children of wrath as belonging to the lineage of the first Adam, they are grafted into the second, their baptism is the seal of their present adoption, and the pledge of their regeneration when they are capable of it. Unholy by nature, they are *sanctified through baptismal consecration to God*. Christ has blessed them, their alien estate is passed, ‘*and now are*

* Whedon, in *Bibliotheca Sacra*, 1862, p. 258.

your children holy.' In the case of adults, personal faith and conscious acceptance of the terms of the covenant are essential. Of this infants are incapable, but the Lord is their everlasting Sponsor, and when He said, 'Of such is the kingdom of heaven,' He admitted them to all the privileges of His covenant, including the gift of the Holy Spirit to take from them the doom of the race, and to afford them all the preliminary influences of His salvation.

"The baptism of the children of believing parents is therefore a sign of the washing away of original guilt, and a seal of their adoption into the family of God; a sign of the regeneration which their nature needs, and a seal of its impartation in God's good time." *

Infants are justified freely by grace, whether baptized or not. Baptism "is the seal of their present adoption," and adds to this "all that they are capable of receiving," "they are grafted into the second Adam." "Unholy by nature, they are sanctified through baptismal consecration to God, Christ has blessed them, their alien estate has passed, 'and now are your children holy.'" "Admitted to all the privileges of this covenant, including the gift of the Holy Spirit to take from them the doom of the race, and to afford them all the preliminary influences of His salvation." If one reads these claims for baptism by themselves he would certainly conclude that this author believed that baptism regenerates the infant. Yet he says such baptism is only "a *sign* of the washing away of original guilt and a seal of their adoption into the family of God." Verily the sign and seal have all the force of regeneration.

Does not this author admit as much when he says, "In the case of adults personal faith and conscious acceptance of the terms of the covenant are essential; of this infants

* William B. Pope, Didsbury College, Manchester, "Compendium of Christian Theology," vol. iii., p. 317, second revised edition.

are incapable, *but the Lord is their everlasting Sponsor*"? The Lord answers for their lack of faith. The only difference between this view and Luther's is that Luther claimed that children did possess this faith in embryo.

It is clear that a distinct blessing is made to attend infant baptism, yet this author does not call it regeneration, for he says that "all infants [whether baptized or not] are justified freely by His grace," that the prevenient grace of the Atonement justifies them. This justifying grace, according to another author, if faithfully used from childhood, if not allowed to perish, "will be accepted of God in the day of judgment, whether Jew or Greek, Christian or heathen."*

This being justified freely by His grace in infancy or at birth, having all the force and effect of regeneration, should at least include it. If justified before baptism, the effect of baptism itself must be only supplementary in character. The writer—Pope—does not state clearly what this may be, but says, "it is all they are capable of receiving."

Another author of this Church in the United States presents his views in a similar manner to the one just quoted. He, however, says: "The salvation of infants can not be regarded as a salvation from the peril of eternal death; they have not committed sin, the only thing that incurs such a peril."

The peril of infants on account of Adam's transgression is at most a theoretic peril, and from this theoretic peril all men are saved, for "by the righteousness of one the free gift came upon all men unto justification of life." "The saving influence of the Holy Ghost must be, for Christ's sake, unconditionally bestowed."† Infants then are unconditionally saved; they are regenerated certainly, for they

* Warren's "Systematic Theology," vol. i., p. 146.

† See Minor Raymond's works, vol. ii., p. 31.

can not be saved without. The atonement alone secures this much for them.

An authority whose dictum will be questioned by few in the Methodist Church states its doctrine of infant salvation in these words: "That the dying infant is saved, and saved by the atonement, we all agree. But this precise condition is affected by the Atonement, while a living infant seems to be a somewhat undecided matter. Probably a large majority of the Methodist Episcopal Church have, for some time past, held without much discussion that the living infant was both unjustified and unregenerate, and yet upon his death he obtained both blessings. This making death the condition of justification and regeneration appears to many hardly logical and not without danger." *

To make regeneration and justification dependent upon any contingency, such as birth or death, is evidently unscientific and unreasonable; they are not conditions such as the Atonement requires, yet Dr. Warren makes them dependent upon the first and Dr. Whedon upon the second.

The author just quoted says: "The subject is a matter of calm discussion, and perhaps the number of those holding the doctrine of infant regeneration has decidedly increased." †

The same unsettled views are prevalent in the great Methodist Episcopal Church as exist in all the other branches of Protestantism.

Before leaving the history of the doctrine of infant salvation in this Church, the attention of the reader is called to the fact that its baptismal service declares of infants: "Of such is the kingdom of heaven"; also, "that none can enter into the kingdom of God unless he be regenerate." Logically, therefore, infants must be regenerated before they

* Dr. Whedon, in "Bibliotheca Sacra," 1862, p. 268.

† *Idem*.

can be saved. It is not proper to use the term in connection with the baptismal service except it be to imply that regeneration and baptism are inseparably connected. Tho this inference is not drawn in the liturgy, yet it must be just. In view of this, it seems illogical to hold a second theory, that all infants, dying such, will be saved, whether baptized or not. One or the other of these theories is wrong. Either baptismal regeneration is an error, or the one that all infants can be saved without baptism is unfounded. If the first be repudiated, then attention is called to the fact that the latter supposes that the infant is regenerated without baptism, either at the birth or the death of the child. We have no assurance from the Word of God that regeneration attends such contingencies as birth or death. All this is assumed in the doctrine as taught by the writers quoted. It is true "we are justified freely by His grace," but we are also told that "a man is justified by faith." The infant then must have faith if the latter theory is correct; it can not be established without it. If faith be granted, then the theory is plausible, to say the least; but faith must be present, as it is a *sine qua non* in all spiritual life. But if this one be established, then the doctrine of baptismal regeneration is erroneous, since grace is not absolutely dependent upon any of the means of grace, and if it can precede baptism in one case, it can in all. No contingency, such as birth or death, can delay it. For the present this part of the subject will be passed by, but will be resumed in the second part of the treatise.

It is interesting to note in this history of the doctrine of infant salvation that tho there has been a great variety of opinions entertained and advocated concerning it, yet there has been absolute unanimity in one essential particular. All have agreed that infants are not rendered incapable of spiritual grace, because they can not actively hear the Word

and believe. Every one of the writers quoted, from Justin Martyr to the present, and also the Old and New Testaments, agree that saving grace lies within the reach of the infant, either with or without the use of the means of grace. They are not spiritual imbeciles. We shall take advantage of this fact as progress is made.

It is now time that we turn to those who take the opposite view of this doctrine and devote the remaining pages of the history of the doctrine of infant salvation to the opinions expressed by them.

CHAPTER XVI

ANTIPEDOBAPTISTS, OR IMMERSIONISTS — CONCLUSION OF PART FIRST

OTHER confessions have something to say of original sin and its nature. Baptist confessions do not mention it by name, tho it is implicitly included in their articles "on the fall of man." One of these says: "By voluntary transgression man fell from that holy and happy state, in consequence of which all mankind are now sinners, not by constraint, but choice; being by nature utterly void of that holiness required by the law of God; positively inclined to evil, and therefore under just condemnation to eternal ruin, without defense or excuse." *

The Southern Confession, art. iv., says: "Whereby [by the fall] death came upon all, all becoming dead in sin, . . . being now conceived in sin, and by nature children of wrath." And the Free-Will Baptists' Confession, art. iv. says: "The whole human family became exposed [by the fall] to temporal and eternal death."

A recent authority says: "Infants are in a state of sin; need to be regenerated, and can be saved only through Christ. Yet as compared with those who have personally transgressed, they are recognized as possessed of a relative innocence, and of a submissiveness and trustfulness which may serve to illustrate the graces of Christian character.

* Art. iii., "The Fall of Man." Confession of Faith of Regular Baptists (Northern).

For this reason they are the objects of special divine compassion and care; and through the grace of Christ are certain of salvation." *

While the Baptist Confessions do not mention original sin as such, yet they describe the effect of the fall in language that assures us that the natural state of the infant is a hopeless one. It is "under just condemnation to eternal ruin without defense or excuse." But while holding this to be true, the Baptists also teach that no infant, dying such, will be lost. Infant baptism is rejected as unscriptural and a profanation of the sacrament. According to their system, baptism has no regenerating or saving efficacy; it is merely an outward sign of grace already bestowed upon the recipient, a public profession of faith in Christ to the world, and the act by which one enters upon the privileges and duties of church membership. This, however, is not true of one sect of immersionists, the Campbellites or Disciples. This sect teaches that regeneration can not precede immersion, but is simultaneous with it; both are concurrent. The Disciples also reject infant baptism. The reason assigned for this unanimous rejection by immersionists is, that infants can not hear the Word or have faith in God—in other words, they are spiritual imbeciles. Their Confession of 1688, the most important and authoritative, limits the right of baptism to those "who do actually profess repentance toward God, faith in, and obedience to, our Lord Jesus."

Dr. A. H. Strong, professor of theology in Rochester Theological Seminary, in his work on "Systematic Theology," says, respecting the baptism of infants: "The condition of salvation for adults is personal faith. Infants are incapable of fulfilling this condition. Since Christ has died

* President A. H. Strong, of Theological Seminary, Rochester, N. Y., "Systematic Theology," p. 355.

for all, we have reason to believe that provision is made for their reception of Christ in some other way."*

This same writer says: "Infant baptism is without warrant, either expressed or implied. . . . There is no express command that infants should be baptized. There is no clear example of the baptism of infants. The passages held to imply infant baptism contain, when fairly interpreted, no reference to such a practise."

He also says: "Infant baptism is expressly contradicted by the Scriptural prerequisites of faith and repentance as signs of regeneration. In the great commission Matthew speaks of baptizing disciples, and Mark of baptizing believers, but infants are neither of these. The reasoning by which it [infant baptism] is supported is unscriptural, unsound, and dangerous in its tendency."

He holds also that "the evil effects of infant baptism are a strong argument against it.

"First, in *forestalling the voluntary act of the child* baptized, and thus practically preventing his personal obedience to Christ's command.

"Secondly, in *inducing superstitious confidence* in an outward rite as possessed of regenerating efficacy.

"Thirdly, in obscuring and corrupting Christian truth with regard to this sufficiency of Scripture, the connection of the ordinances, and the inconsistency of an impenitent life with church membership.

"Fifthly, in putting into the place of Christ's command a commandment of men, and so admitting the essential principle of all heresy, schism, and false religion."†

Other writers of the same faith are wont to vent their hostility to, and abhorrence of, infant baptism in the severest language. Mr. Kinghorn says that infant baptism

*"Observations," (e), p. 355.

* *Idem*, p. 536.

is "the very precursor of Antichrist, the inlet of almost every abomination."

Dr. Carson regards it as "the fortress of the man of sin. . . . The very spirit of Antichrist."

Dr. Ide says "that old upas-tree, with its death-distilling branches—popery, prelacy, and skepticism—has for fourteen centuries shaded and blasted the world."

Dr. Howell: "An evil which despoils the Church and subverts the doctrine of infant salvation which is the grand foundation of the union of the Church and state; the source of religious persecutions; a hindrance to the conversion of the world; a sin against God; one of the most calamitous evils with which the Church has ever been visited; the most melancholy of all evils, and more disastrous to the cause of truth and salvation than any of the progeny of superstition."

The Western Baptist Recorder: "Of all the damnable heresies in the black catalog which has befouled the fame of Christianity we consider infant baptism the most damnable. If other heresies have damned their thousands, this has damned its tens of thousands."

Dr. Fuller calls it "an Antichristian practise; introducing and perpetuating the most glaring inconsistency and mischievous confusion; tarnishing the glory of the atonement, and doing vast injury to our children."*

The dreadful evils these writers attribute to infant baptism spring from two fundamental errors which they believe it involves:

"First, that infants can not be regenerated because they are incapable of active faith and repentance.

"Second, that it induces superstitious confidences in an outward rite as possessed of regenerating efficacy."

The reader will observe that the first of these alleged

*See Dr. Seiss's "Baptist System Examined," p. 287.

errors disclaims entirely what all the other churches have taught for nineteen hundred years, namely, that the infant is a proper subject for grace, that it can be in a saved state before death, that it is not a spiritual imbecile, and is capable of regeneration. Baptist writers deny this. In one place Dr. Strong admits, "That they [infants] are recognized as possessed of a relative innocence and of a submissiveness and trustfulness which may serve to illustrate the graces of Christian character. For this reason they are the objects of special divine compassion and care; and through the grace of Christ are certain of salvation." This is as near regeneration as infants can approach. Until they can have personal faith and repentance, it is impossible for them to be regenerated while living, since the infant can not be saved without regeneration any more than the adult can. What, then, becomes of it at its death? Dr. Strong says: "Since there is no evidence that children dying in infancy are regenerated prior to death, either with or without the use of external means, it seems most probable that the work of regeneration may be performed by the Spirit *in connection with the infant soul's first view of Christ in the other world.* . . . The first moment of consciousness for the infant may be coincident with a view of Christ, the Savior, which accomplishes the entire sanctification of its nature. 'We know that if He shall be manifested, we shall be like Him, for we shall see Him as He is.' While in the nature of things, and by the express declarations of Scripture, we are precluded from extending this doctrine of regeneration at death to any who have committed personal sins; we are, nevertheless, warranted in the conclusion that certain and great as is the guilt of original sin, no human soul is eternally condemned solely for this sin of nature; but that, on the other hand, all who have not consciously and willfully transgressed are made partakers of Christ's salva-

tion.”* These words leave no doubt upon one’s mind that the author of them believes that the infant while living is a spiritual imbecile; after death it becomes spiritually conscious, and then only can it be sanctified and prepared for salvation. In this particular the Baptists positively contradict all other theologies. For the present the attention of the reader is simply called to this fact.

No objections will be made to the view that all infants will be saved that die such; but very serious objections will be made to the one that they must die first before they can be saved; for did not the Savior subject them to His blessing while on earth, and what then would there be to prevent His own disciples blessing them, since He distinctly told them that they should do greater things than He did? Was not His blessing spiritual in its character? Must they not therefore be capable of receiving it, tho unconscious? Could it be a blessing and fall short of saving grace? Certainly the Savior did not regard infants as so helpless that their eyes must first close in death, and their tender souls be ushered into the presence of the great King before they could be saved.

But Dr. Strong also quotes in proof of this view 2 Cor. iii:18: “But we all with open face beholding as in a glass the glory of the Lord, are changed into the same image, from glory to glory, even as by the Spirit of the Lord.” Also 1 John iii:2: “We know that when he shall appear we shall be like him, for we shall see him as he is.” He then adds: “If asked why more is not said upon this subject in Scripture, we reply, it is according to the analogy of God’s general method to hide things that are not of immediate practical value.”

Neither of these Scripture passages which he quotes has reference to any but the present life nor to any unregene-

* “Systematic Theology,” “Observations,” (g), p. 356.

rate soul that enters the eternal world, either infant or adult. The first passage is 2 Cor. iii: 18: They are "changed from glory to glory," etc. This has special reference to the present life and to adult Christians, who while yet living are changed into the image of the Lord. This one, therefore, is misapplied, both in respect to infants and the future state.

The other passage, "When he shall appear, we shall be like him," etc., can not be applied to the case of any unsaved soul that enters the future world. Let us quote the whole verse. The first part is as follows: "Beloved, *now* are we the sons of God, and it doth not yet appear what we shall be; but we know that when he shall appear we shall be like him," etc.

Certainly the complete reading puts another face upon the meaning of this verse. Only those who are "now the sons of God" can hope for the blessed transformation.

Now, while the Christian is yet in the world, it "doth not yet appear what we shall be"; but those who are now the sons of God shall after death be like Christ, "for they shall see him as he is." This vastly enlarged conception is reserved for the godly after their death, but not for any unregenerate soul, not even for the infant that enters the future life in an unsaved state. Moreover, if the unsaved infant can be changed upon its "first view of Christ in the other world," there is nothing to prevent a similar change on the part of the adult; there can be no valid reason for confining this privilege to infants. Why not adults as well as infants? This change, if wrought in the next world, is wrought by the Holy Spirit just as in this; then why was the Paraclete sent down to earth to do this work? Why did the Savior say, "The night cometh when no man can work"? Why was the rich man reminded only of the "great gulf fixed"? Why was he not advised of this hope

by Abraham? Had there been salvation for him it is not reasonable to suppose he would have made those fruitless requests for himself and his five brothers. This would be Origen's theory revamped. Dr. Strong's theory is one that is sufficiently speculative easily to embrace with infants, to whom he says that it alone applies, all adults who before death never had the Gospel preached to them. It is a dangerous theory. Comparatively few writers have advocated it, because the Scriptures do not teach it. Stier infers from the words "He that believeth not shall be damned" that every soul must first have the opportunity of hearing the Word before it can be adjudged an unbeliever and be condemned. Dean Alford and Canon Farrar interpret those passages (1 Peter iii:19, 20, and iv:6) as teaching that an opportunity will be given to the heathen dead to hear the Gospel, repent, and be saved. Tho all may not accept the Gospel, they will at least have the opportunity to do so.

This theory has been condemned as unsound in the past, and is so regarded by the great mass of theologians to-day; but if Dr. Strong's views respecting the salvation of infants after death are accepted by Baptists generally, then they can easily believe that all heathen also can be saved after death. This erroneous theory without doubt originated indirectly in the belief of the absolute dependence of the soul upon its ability either to hear and to believe the Gospel, or to be baptized in order to be saved. After Augustine's time the Church became the sole repository of saving grace, "*Extra ecclesiam non dari salutem*"—No salvation out of the Church. This was accepted without dispute until the time of the Reformation, when Zwingli repudiated it entirely. Melancthon, however, seems to accept it, whom tho previously quoted, it will be in place to do so again. In his "Apology" he says: "Now the promises do not ap-

ply to these [adults and children], if they be out of the Church of Christ, where there is no Gospel nor sacrament. For the kingdom of Christ is only where the Word of God and the sacraments exist."

Similar to this one is that other dogma, which, tho variously stated, is in substance as follows: "Saving grace can be found only in the means of grace." Only those can be saved who are brought under the means of grace, infants not excepted. Naturally those who accept this view will be inclined to search for some escape for helpless infants who die unbaptized. The Baptist theory, finding no escape for them through the means of grace, since they as infants are spiritual imbeciles, naturally seeks to rescue them after death. These views arise from an imperfect conception of the efficacy of atoning grace, which is made entirely dependent upon the means of grace whether the subject is worthy or not. Without doubt the Scriptures teach that all infants coming into the world become its subjects; that they are not incapables; that provision is made for them, so that in case of death they need no change in the eternal world to be saved; and if they do fail of baptism, they need not perish. Is not this much implied in the doctrine of a universal atonement? If its efficacy to cleanse from original sin be conditioned upon the use of the means of grace, then its universality is a myth. The Scripture that Christ "by the grace of God tasted death for every man" is only partially true, unless that death can in some way avail for all that vast multitude who come into the world and pass out of it without actual sin.

As it shall be the aim in the second part of this work to prove that all infants are saved by grace, for the present the reader's attention will be called to only a few passages of Scripture which appear conclusive in proof of this. First of all, the Savior's declaration, "Of such is the king-

dom of heaven." This applies to infants as a class. Matt. i:21: "Thou shalt call his name Jesus, for he shall *save* his people from their sins." In what sense could this be true except He did save them in fact—did not simply atone for their sins, but saves from original sin? Rom. v:18: "Therefore as by the offense of one, judgment came upon all men to condemnation; even so by the righteousness of one, the free gift came upon all men unto justification of life." Here the righteousness of Christ with its power to justify is not only said to be coextensive with the condemnation of all men, but it is positively affirmed that it has actually effected their justification. In the twentieth verse, "Where sin abounded grace did much more abound," we must infer that grace, the province of which is to save, must actually save, else it is not grace; grace can only be grace as an actuality, not as a mere conditional something which we may never enjoy. So if this grace abounded to bless, much more than sin—original sin—abounds to curse, then it abounds to save from sin. It is made to stand in direct antagonism to all that original sin has done, and being more abundant, it must take away the condemnation of all sin that is not actual. And that this is correct the following verse (21) gives assurance: "That as sin hath reigned unto death, even so might grace reign through righteousness unto eternal life by Jesus Christ our Lord." As the reign of sin effected our death, so the coextensive reign of grace cancels that death, and its superabundance secures besides eternal life. Thus we are not only rescued from the dominion of sin, but have everlasting life also.

Luther advances this idea in his marginal note on John xv:22: "If I had not come and spoken unto them, they had not had sin." Upon this he comments thus: "Through Christ original sin is annulled, and no MAN, since Christ's

coming, is condemned unless he will not forsake it [original sin], that is, will not believe.”*

Dr. Charles Hodge says: “We believe as fully and joyfully as he [Professor Stewart] does, that the grace which is in Christ Jesus secures the salvation of all who have no personal sins to answer for.”† This same author in his “Systematic Theology,”‡ takes positive grounds in favor of the saved condition of all infants. He says: “It is therefore contrary not only to the argument of the apostle, but to the whole spirit of the passage (Rom. v:12–21), to exclude infants from ‘*the all*’ who are made alive in Christ.”

If the Baptists generally would teach that all infants are within the reach of atoning grace, that they are not hopeless imbeciles, there would need be no such dangerous theory advanced as that of Dr. Strong. They could then hold that the infant could be prepared before death for eternal life; that to be redeemed it need not first die; that it can be saved by other means than the sight of its Savior.

This same theory of Dr. Strong would also compel all to revise their preconceived notions respecting the Comforter, the Paraclete. He came manifestly to all, but He finds here one class of subjects who, forsooth, for want of age are beyond His reach—are imbeciles; for this reason they must first die; death instantaneously destroys this imbecility; partly, it is presumed, because it disrobes the soul of flesh and blood, and partly because the newly released spirit is ushered immediately into the presence of its Savior. Behold the wonderful change! That imbecile spirit is, as if by magic or a miracle, instantaneously released from its imbecility, and obtains a saving glimpse of its Savior. Is it true that the Paraclete finds His coming must prove of none effect to at least one-third of all those infants born

* C. P. Krauth, in *Evangelical Review*, p. 346, July, 1866.

† *Essays*, p. 71.

‡ Vol. i., pp. 26, 27.

into the world—that He must be content to wait until their death? Is it true that in all such instances He must transfer to the eternal world the work He was sent to do in this one? In other words, is it true that the Savior could bless these little ones while on earth, but He whom the Savior sent for a like purpose into the world, and to do even “greater things” than He, finds it impossible to do this because of their unconsciousness and consequent imbecility? This is pure speculation, rationalism, and the conclusion drawn from it is without foundation in reason or Scripture. Why that command, “Suffer little children to come unto me,” if they could not come? Why the declaration that “He put his hands upon them and blessed them” if they could not be blessed? If their infancy was no barrier to the Savior, why should it be to the Holy Spirit? Does not this view of Dr. Strong partake of the nature of that serious mistake of Israel whereof the Psalmist says (lxxviii: 41): “They limited the Holy One of Israel”?

The Baptist also assumes that because the infant can not hear the Word and believe it, can not become a subject of saving grace; on this same account it is not a fit subject for baptism. But is it not true that very many of those adults who are immersed do not believe, and on that account are not fit subjects for immersion? Doubtless very many who at the time of their baptism are believed to be proper subjects, prove afterward to have been unworthy. Dr. Strong says (p. 530): “The proper subjects of baptism are those only who give credible evidence that they have been regenerated by the Spirit, or, in other words, have entered by faith into the communion of Christ’s death and resurrection. Those only are to be baptized who have previously repented and believed.” This would be more reasonable if man’s judgment was infallible, but since it is not, it is absurd. Immersionists after their immersions are doubtless very

often compelled to ask, "Were there not ten cleansed, but where are the nine?" If, therefore, many adults fail after their immersion to follow Christ, why should it be considered such an unholy thing to offer the infant in baptism?

The history of the doctrine of infant salvation has now been given somewhat in detail as it has been accepted under the Jewish and Christian economies. We have seen that all through these, until the time of Luther, the infant was looked upon as a fit subject for saving grace; that since then a small minority of professed Christians have taught that it is a spiritual imbecile; also that the theory they now hold concerning their regeneration after death is pure speculation, unsupported by the Word of God.

It has also been made apparent that during the first three centuries of the Christian era absolute silence prevailed upon the subject of infant damnation. After that Ambrose ventured to teach that all unbaptized infants might be lost. Then for twelve hundred years the damnation of unbaptized infants that died was taught with practical unanimity. At the commencement of the great Protestant Reformation, Ulrich Zwingli taught that all infants that died would be saved. Now all, or nearly all, Protestants believe that such infants will be saved. Some do so upon the ground that infants belong to the elect. Others, that if infants miss baptism, God will save them in some extraordinary manner.

Many theologians even of our day find their solution of the difficulty in the belief that there will be a future probation for infants, and all those who did not enjoy the privileges of the Gospel in this life will have it preached to them in the future state, where they can accept or reject it as they elect.

Still other theologians teach that infants will be saved because of the Atonement, regardless of baptism or the piety

of their parents; and that not only dead infants, but all others, both heathen and Christian, are in a saved condition.

The Antipedobaptist believes that infants will after death be regenerated and saved upon their first glimpse of their Redeemer in the unseen world. All theologians are in comparative agreement respecting the fate of the dead infant, tho they reach this conclusion from different directions. They do not all agree, however, as to the state of infants that do not die. Some believe that unless these are baptized they continue in original sin, and are in a lost condition; others, that they are in a state of grace, whether baptized or not. It is safe to say that the doctrine of infant salvation among Protestants is still in a speculative state. None of these conclusions are taught as absolutely sound. The authors do not claim this for them, but rather that they prefer their own to any other, that it is as Scriptural as any and harmonizes best with their system of doctrine. Each one is satisfied that his is the best explanation given of a most perplexing subject, one that must necessarily be left in its present unsolved state.

The Catholic and the Greek Church, tho differing from each other in their teaching upon this subject, have maintained their views with considerable unanimity. Yet neither of these agrees with the other or with any of the Protestant teachings. If these facts are borne in mind, it is enough to lead one to despair of ever reaching a conclusion that will be satisfactory to all.

Another difficulty in the way is, that unless the proposed theory will fit in all respects into some old and accepted system of doctrine, it will at first be rejected, and the author probably be charged with disloyalty, heterodoxy, and a due share of presumption. Nothing is more tenacious of life or more jealous of its interests than old-established systems of theology. They resent the slightest encroachment

upon their domains and the least infringement of their imaginary rights. Even that which pretends to nothing but a legitimate development of a doctrine within the limits of Scripture is often rejected upon no other ground than that of innovation. This jealousy has its good and its bad side, its merits and demerits. If, in all particulars, a given system is correct and consistent, it deserves the highest praise; but it would have to be more than human if this were the case.

The Church owes a debt she can never repay to her "maulers of heresies," but even these zealous lovers of the truth may in some instances or particulars be mistaken, and level their blows so as to subserve the cause of error rather than the cause of truth. It is on these accounts that little progress is made in the development of doctrine, and probably that little has been attempted in recent years upon the speculative and undeveloped subject of infant salvation. The writer, after having carefully studied the history of the doctrines pertaining to this subject, modestly ventures to assert that no one of the theories evolved meets in all respects the Scriptural requirements in the case; the speculative character of them all and the lack of certainty betrayed by the advocates of each confirm this belief.

In view of these facts, and, as he hopes, in the interest of sound doctrine and true piety as well, he ventures to present his own views upon this subject. To his own mind they seem Scriptural, and therefore safe and sound. Whether he is correct or not remains to be seen.

Before passing from the history of this doctrine, it may be well to call attention to the weakness of all those theories which are content to teach that only infants who die will be saved, and which make no effort to relieve the condition of the infant that does not die. Infants should be considered as a class. No distinction should be made in

favor of the class that dies to the exclusion of the class that lives. If the dead infants become subjects of grace, the living should also. They also need grace in infancy to prepare them to live as well as to die. It is a singular oversight that passes by the living and thinks only of the dead. Besides, a great scheme like that of redemption is weakened when you confine it to infants that die, and let it save only them and the baptized ones that live, while those who live without baptism are left in an uncertain, undecided state. Another weakness is that which teaches that baptism monopolizes regeneration so far as infants are concerned, that regenerating grace is helpless without it. In order to secure for baptism the prominence the Scriptures require for it, it is not necessary to throttle regenerating grace and subject it to its arbitrary power. This is subjecting the greater to the less, and obtaining a small advantage at frightful loss. If after surveying the whole field there could be found no way of escape—if the Scriptures afford no relief, suggest no remedy and necessarily exact the awful tribute, then it is time enough to submit, and then submission becomes a sacred duty. But if there is a Scriptural way of escape, honorable alike to baptism and regenerating grace as well, then it is our duty to search for it, and, if possible, find it. This search will be made at length in Part II.

For the present, it is sufficient to say that no wrong can come to baptism in this investigation. Let all its rights be respected, and, on the other hand, let the rights of regenerating grace be also respected. It is by no means necessary to dethrone the one in order to crown the other.

For the present the attention of the reader is called to these defects, and is asked to bear them in mind; they will be treated at length in Part II. of this work. To this we now invite careful attention.

PART II

CHAPTER XVII

RECAPITULATION — OLD THEORIES OBJECTIONABLE — THE LOVE AND MERCY OF GOD CONFIRMS THE CONVICTION THAT HE HAS PROVIDED A WAY FOR THE SALVATION OF INFANTS, SINCE THEY ARE NOT SPIRITUAL IMPOTENTS—UNCONSCIOUSNESS NO BARRIER

THE careful student of the history and development of the doctrine of infant salvation will learn that as far down as the fifteenth century it was taught that all infants were in a lost condition until regenerated by baptism. This baptism was the sacrament of the Holy Ghost, and was equivalent to regeneration. This regeneration was objective rather than subjective, but was sufficient for the salvation of infants, as they had never become actual sinners.

A recognized authority in the history of doctrine says of that most obscure period of the Church—the first and second centuries: "Like the apostles, the first teachers of the Church regard baptism not as a mere ritual act, but as having its objective results. . . . Baptism to them was not merely a significant symbol representing to the senses the internal consecration and renewal of the soul, but an efficacious medium for conveying objectively to believers the blessings of the Gospel, and especially the benefits of the sacrificial death of Christ." *

* Hagenbach's "History of Doctrine," vol. i., p. 279.

It can not be stated positively just what the Christian Church during the first and second centuries taught concerning the fate of unbaptized infants that died. Neither the apostolic nor patristic Fathers make this clear. We may infer, however, from the fact that they laid much stress upon baptism (so much, indeed, that in the fourth century the damnation of all unbaptized infants became the firm belief of the Church), that during the first two centuries there must have existed at least the fear that infants dying without baptism would not be saved. In all probability, from the commencement the trend was in favor of this view.

After the fourth century, it was firmly believed that all such infants suffered not simply the loss of heaven, but in some measure also the punishment of the senses.

Coupled with baptism, exorcism and the Lord's Supper began to be employed for infants, but not until after the middle of the third century. These latter usages were practised with varying favor and continued until condemned by the Council of Trent in the fifteenth century. After this they for the most part disappeared.

Pelagius in the fifth century, it is true, dissented from the prevailing views respecting the fate of infants that died without baptism. But while he did this, he also maintained that they could not, without it, enter the kingdom of heaven, but that there was a middle state to which they were consigned and which he called *Eternal Life*.

After the sixth century the views of Augustine respecting preterition and reprobation began to wane, but baptism, which for a time had been modified by them, came to the front again with more prominence than before. This prominence it maintained and still maintains in the Roman and Greek churches.

Wyclif, Huss, Luther, and some in the Catholic Church,

while insisting upon the necessity of baptism whenever possible, yet ventured to teach that God might "in some extraordinary manner" save such as were beyond its reach; since it is the wilful rejection of baptism that condemns, and not the want of it.

It was Zwingli, the Swiss reformer and contemporary of Luther, who openly taught that all infants entered heaven at death, whether baptized or not; that baptism was only a ceremonial sign with which salvation was not connected. He regarded original sin as a disease, misfortune, or natural defect, and not as sin in any true sense. It could become evil and condemn the soul only after it had been allowed to assert itself in acts of transgression. He escaped Pelagianism only by teaching that in the infant original sin was not to be regarded as innocent, but as a misfortune. Infants inherit it through no fault of their own. The guilt of original sin was confined to Adam.

There are at the present time many who differ with Zwingli respecting the nature of depravity; but aside from the Catholic and Greek churches, there are none who teach that unbaptized infants are lost after death. Indeed, even the Catholic Church is silent at present on the subject.

It can now be truthfully said that, with few exceptions, all Protestantism believes that the infants of Christians, unbelievers, and heathen are received into the company of the blessed after death.

Ever since the great Reformation a gradual change has been taking place respecting the absolute necessity of infant baptism, until it has finally reached this stage. Among Pedobaptists this change may be defined as being a partial loss to the infant that dies without it. This loss, tho not of so grave a character as to expose such infants to damnation, is yet sufficient to modify the blessedness of their life in heaven. Infant baptism, therefore, has its place in the

Church. It is still a sacrament for the infant as well as for the adult.

While all Protestants are practically unanimous in believing that dead infants are saved, yet it can not be said that the grounds upon which their belief rests are satisfactory. They are all open to serious objections.

The surmise that God might have "some extraordinary way" besides baptism leaves the living unbaptized infant in a very uncertain state. Surmises are far from satisfactory in a case of this kind.

The decretal system bases its latest belief in infant salvation on the mere declaration that all dead infants are elect, therefore they are regenerated before they die. The doctrine of election assures that much. Singular enough that a system which rejects this assurance concerning others who are elect, and says their election is "known only to God," can reach such an assurance for the dead infant. It does violence to the system. Its unconditional election succumbs to one condition at least, which is death.

The Arminians in the seventeenth century adopted Zwingli's mild view of original sin, and taught that the infant is not responsible or punishable before actual transgression; so its salvation at death was inevitable, regardless of baptism or other means. Innocence does not save.

"The Methodists and Baptists," says Dr. Schaff, "adopted the same view."*

Neither of these views of this important subject is satisfactory; both are little better than assumptions. The subject deserves something more plausible which will commend itself not only to the mind more or less influenced by its own theological bias, but to the unbiased student also. Strained conclusions are nowhere at so great a disadvantage as in grave theological discussion.

*"Creeds of Christendom," vol. i., pp. 380, 381.

The Zwinglian view that original sin is not sin, but a misfortune simply, which leaves the infant innocent and assumes that on the ground of innocency alone it will be saved, is objectionable. Innocence is simply a negative state. No sin; no virtue; no grace. Must we not in some way become partakers of saving grace before we can be prepared for the immortal glory which is dependent upon it? Certainly innocence alone is not sufficient ground upon which to base a hope of salvation. The life of Christ in some way imparted to us is the only sure ground of salvation. In one respect Zwingli excelled Pelagius, for the latter taught that the infant, tho innocent, could not, without baptism, enter the kingdom of heaven; but the Zwinglian view admits them without this grace of baptism. Yet some who would repudiate the charge of Pelagianism as an aspersion upon their faith even outdo it in the same way.

The Calvinistic school does not hesitate to teach the lost condition of all infants coming into the world. It also admits that original sin is damnatory, whether in the infant or the adult. It has no sympathy with Pelagianism, nor does it stop to consider the means of grace to be employed for infants, all which means are secondary. The election dominates everything; it arbitrarily steps in and saves the soul. One can understand how the mind trained from the beginning in this system of doctrine could accept it up to this point, but certainly the view that all dead infants are necessarily of the elect because they died is sadly out of harmony with it.

The Arminian with much assurance teaches that infants dying are sure of salvation because they are saved through the Atonement. Certainly if saved at all, they must be saved through the Atonement. But the inquiring mind wants additional light, and asks: Can the Atonement become effective without the use of any of the established

means? If you insist upon it that these means are unnecessary, then at least give some valid reason to allay the fears of those who make this potent inquiry.

The Lutheran finds it difficult to rid his mind of the necessity of means, but with the Arminian he hopes there may be some way, which God has not seen fit to reveal, by which the unbaptized may be saved. Nor can the Lutheran adopt the rigid, sacramental views of the Greek and Roman churches. If only those infants are saved whose parents have presented them themselves, or through sponsors, for baptism, what then has become of that vast army of infants that has died out of each generation of the past, and what will become of the yet ever-increasing multitudes that will be taken from generations yet to be? Is all this aggregated, innumerable host of helpless tender ones to be cast out into some dreary limbo forever, because by inability, accident, ignorance, prejudice, or sin their parents left them to die without the benefits of the regenerating sacrament of baptism? No, the Lutheran can not accept this; he at least hopes that there is "some other way not revealed" by which they will be saved.

Earnest, devout, sincere minds have defended these different theories, tho they differ from each other widely; even contradict and antagonize each other in some of their more important particulars. The salvation of infants is still left a subject for speculation; it is an unsolved problem. There is certainly some satisfactory solution, some way out of this perplexity. In the hope of obtaining additional light and of arriving at a more satisfactory conclusion than the old theories warrant, the writer ventures now to give his own views upon this subject; this he does, conscious of the apparent rashness and presumption of such an attempt in the face of the fact that the ablest and best men of all denominations have theorized upon it. The only

apology for such an attempt as this must lie in the fact that their theories clash, even among writers of the same denomination. It is not therefore against the combined wisdom of the Church that this theory enters the field, but against unsettled conflicting theories which fail to satisfy in all respects even the authors of them, and which, instead of peace, have brought a sword.

Should the reasons given herein materially aid the reader in removing doubt and uncertainty upon this subject, and in arriving at something more tangible and practical, then the writer's aim will be accomplished. The reasons given and conclusions reached are satisfactory to his own mind, but how they may impress others can not even be conjectured. Any theological view advanced that is not in full accord with the teaching of some established school will at first be regarded with suspicion. The human mind is so constituted that views and theories in theology, long entertained and sanctioned, even after they have been found defective, yield but slowly at first. They are tenacious of life. New theories are on this account regarded with suspicion and often condemned on sight.

The writer is of the opinion, however, that there are many in all schools whose minds, like his own, have always been unsettled upon this particular subject and may therefore be open to conviction. If he is mistaken in this, then this effort may bear little fruit.

The human mind can not escape the conviction that all infants—Christian or heathen, living or dying—should at least stand within reach of the terms of salvation. That they, being born in sin through no fault of theirs, should not be left to live or die in sin simply because they are out of reach of the ordinary means of grace. They are not spiritual imbeciles, but have capacity for grace. Is there not some avenue besides baptism by which grace may reach

all? It is impossible to reconcile our views of divine mercy with an arbitrary condition which, while it accepts and saves a favored few, rejects and consigns to eternal death the countless hosts of helpless little ones who for no fault of theirs have incurred the wrath of God.

One can not at this day bring himself to believe that a merciful God, who withheld not His own Son, could by such arbitrary means bar the gates of heaven against infants. Must we cling so tenaciously to our theories respecting the efficacy of the Church, the sacraments, and election that we would give our hearty indorsement to doctrines so contrary to reason, the whole tenor of the Gospel, and the plan of salvation? Tho we may modify their eternal punishment, as Gregory Nazianzen, Augustine, and Pelagius did, or as the Roman and Greek churches do now, even then there looms up that dreary limbo which not only shuts them out from the glories of the heavenly home, but renders them hapless forever.

Such thoughts, and many more of a kindred character, thrust themselves upon the minds of the most devout, until they are constrained to ask: "Is there not some way provided for the salvation of all that die in infancy?"

The fact that many old theories upon this subject have been greatly modified or abandoned entirely, so that they are not recognized to-day, adds no little plausibility to the suggestion that there is some such way provided. This is also increased by the fact that all Protestantism to-day either tacitly believes or openly teaches that all infants that die are saved. This conclusion it has reached doubtless upon the declaration that the Savior took them in His arms and blessed them, saying, "Of such is the kingdom of heaven."

The theories originated from other passages of Scripture or from tradition which conflict with this plain declaration

of the Savior have failed to stand the test of criticism. This declaration includes not simply infants that die, but those that live also—all infants. In our search after the whole truth, therefore, it will not do to be content with simply satisfying ourselves that only infants that die are saved, but it must be demonstrated that the living ones are also in a state of grace. This alone can rescue the mercy of God and the Atonement from all reproach.

Manifestly there is some way provided by which all infants may be saved, and it is one's duty to institute a careful search for it.

It must be admitted that the unconsciousness of the infant places it, to human minds, in a mysterious relation to the plan of salvation and the means of grace. There is a large class that always associates a work of grace in the heart with consciousness and an act of the will in the subject. These conditions seem to place the infant beyond its reach. Even the early Fathers on this account did not attribute to baptism more than a mere objective regeneration. The advocates of baptismal regeneration necessarily find the doctrine enveloped in much mystery. It is difficult for the minds of such to believe that the work of the Spirit can be effective without the use of the means of grace. Others demand consciousness in the subject with a fairly developed understanding and the active exercise of the will, coupled with some knowledge or conception of God's character and of duty also. Even among Pedobaptists the opinion widely prevails that young children whose minds are just dawning into intelligence, and who are only beginning to know right and wrong, are too young to be Christians. Is it not even the custom with some on this account to refuse them full church-membership until they are at least fourteen years of age? Every pastor knows the apathy

of parents in respect to the early piety of their children, and this apathy is mainly due to the belief that "they are not old enough." Is not this belief due chiefly to the opinion that saving grace demands a fairly developed state of mind, even full consciousness? This is the case even where infant baptism is practised.

While Pedobaptists reason thus, Antipedobaptists make bold to teach the doctrine that before the Holy Spirit in this life can effect any work of grace whatever in the heart, the subject must be old enough to hear the Word and believe, because "faith comes by hearing" only.

Before any sound conclusion can be reached upon the subject of infant salvation, the exact state of the infant soul, its precise relation to the Holy Spirit, and the plan of salvation must be found. It must be ascertained whether it has the necessary condition for grace, whether the Holy Spirit can enter it in its unconscious state without violence. These facts must be clearly proven before the end aimed at in this work can be reached. Herein lies the key to this subject.

While the veil of mystery deeply shrouds this whole question, yet let us not on that account plunge into deeper darkness where reason too often rebels. Are we not enveloped in mystery on every hand? Turn which way we will, it confuses and confounds us. Even so simple a fact as fire flashing from flint is an inexplicable mystery. Fire is an element so foreign to the cold flint that the result not only seems to be, but is, inexplicable. We may pass it by with the common explanation, "Cause and effect," which, tho true as far as the truth can be expressed, yet leaves the mysterious, ultimate fact still unaccounted for; nor can we bridge the chasm by any explanation we may attempt. Ultimate facts are not discoverable. We know they exist, but they are too subtle for the human intellect

to discern. Illustrations of this are seen on every hand. Water is composed of the elements of oxygen and hydrogen; air of oxygen, nitrogen, and argon. Chemistry can analyze the water and the air and discover these elements, but it can not comprehend the mystery that results in their combination—in other words, it can not trace these elements back again so as to tell us why water and air result from their respective elements. The elements of the pearl and the diamond are also known, but they are unlike those of water and air; men have not learned to produce either from the constituents, every attempt at this having so far been baffled.

But if we choose to step out of the sphere of chemistry into the higher one of life here, these mysteries vastly increase, both in number and gravity. From the days of Aristotle to the present, biology and morphology have been most carefully investigated by the acutest intellects. These men have classified and analyzed the forms of vegetable and animal life, and termed the sciences Botany and Biology; but while these sciences are the result of a study of certain facts within reach of the human intellect, there yet remain many that are beyond its grasp. If we enter the vegetable kingdom, what an infinite variety! What mysteries in every seed! The mustard and the acorn, for instance, how small the germ, how large the plant! Yet those tiny germs contain in embryo—or can in some mysterious manner develop out of themselves—the root, trunk, branch, and leaf peculiar to each. They are capable of such wonderful development from so minute a source! That germ so true to itself, so dominated by mysterious law, that root, trunk, branch, stem, and leaf shall each be produced after its own kind. If we ascend again out of the chemical and vegetable into the still higher realm of the animal kingdom, difficulties increase at every step.

There is an infinite variety of these chasms in the types of life exhibited in the mollusca, radiata, articulata, and vertebrata that are all bridged by the hand divine, but the ultimate facts are all profound secrets to the human mind. These mysteries are alluded to in Psalm cxxxix: 13-16: "I am fearfully and wonderfully made; marvelous are thy works," etc. Again, in Eccl. xi: 5. We can well say with the Psalmist: "Such knowledge is too wonderful for me; it is high. I can not attain unto it." Human investigation can reach a certain point; beyond that its efforts are baffled; all trace is lost. We know that certain results follow certain conditions and causes, as fire from flint, plant from seed; but why, we can not tell.

Now if we ascend again into the most intricate and mysterious sphere of all—the spiritual—we must be prepared to meet with insuperable difficulties at the outset. Even the Scriptures assure us of this. The Savior intended to teach Nicodemus that he must expect to meet with mystery in spiritual things. When in answer to his question, "How can these things be?" He replied, "The wind bloweth where it listeth; thou hearest the sound thereof but canst not tell whence it cometh, or whither it goeth; so is every one that is born of the Spirit," He did not attempt an explanation. "Thou canst not tell" even of the wind, "whence it cometh and whither it goeth; so is every one that is born of the Spirit." Mystery, mystery, but "marvel not."

It is enough for us to know that regeneration is a well-attested fact, and that it is possible for all to be regenerated; the ultimate facts respecting it need not concern us. Even if we could comprehend all, it would be of no practical benefit; it would only serve to gratify a vain curiosity.

If, therefore, we are confronted with mystery in the re-

generation of adults at the very threshold, we must expect even greater in the case of unconscious infants, particularly because the Scriptures throw little light upon it. They issue their instructions, commands, and promises only to those who have "ears to hear," and upon the presumption that the hearer can consciously believe. We therefore hesitate, or refuse to believe that infants can receive any positive spiritual blessing, and conclude that they are incapable of regeneration because this act demands a fairly developed understanding, some conception of God's character and some sense of duty with an exercise of the individual will. These are seemingly insuperable difficulties in the way of the infant. If, therefore, regeneration is a mystery in the case of the adult, it is a far greater one in that of the infant.

While we must recognize this fact, yet this much has been shown, that the great body of Christians have ever taught that the infant is not a spiritual imbecile; that it possesses capacity for grace; it therefore only remains to be shown what scarcely needs proof, that is, that the Infinite and Merciful One has not overlooked this prime fact, but has taken advantage of it; and so has made ample provision for every infant. In view of this there is no good reason why we should stand appalled and look at this mystery from a distance. Let us at least draw near and gaze upon this strange sight; let us err, if err we must, on the side of credulity rather than of agnosticism and doubt. There may be some important facts exposed in close proximity to the subject that may well repay the investigator, throw light upon it, and prove of great practical value. By keeping in mind at the same time the mysteries of it we shall be better able to avoid the recklessness which is too often the fruit of presumption. Certainly no harm can come to any one who reverently attempts to ascertain

whether it is possible for the infant to possess that condition of soul that fits it for redeeming grace. More harm is likely to come to one who hastily concludes that because so little is revealed it is better to dismiss the subject entirely.

CHAPTER XVIII

IS SPIRITUAL LIFE POSSIBLE IN EARLY INFANCY?—LIGHT FROM HEREDITY—A PRACTICAL OBSERVATION AND IN- FERENCE FROM THE ARGUMENT

BEFORE advancing it is important to ascertain whether this spiritual life is possible in early infancy or not. Evidently if there must be any advanced stage of experience or knowledge associated with its commencement, then there is no hope for the infant. The view of some that spiritual life must necessarily be accompanied at the instant by a personal, conscious experience is rejected, since that is impossible in most cases even among adults, if not in all; besides, such can point to no Scripture to prove its necessity. This view, however, scarcely deserves notice, since the inconsistency of those who teach it is seen in this, that most of them believe that the soul of the dead infant will be saved if it dies. How can that be unless it is regenerated? How can it be conscious of its regeneration since it has not yet awakened even to self-consciousness?

But is there not in regeneration an initial step so feeble and a commencement so faint that it is possible for the tenderest infant to be regenerated? It is extremely probable that such is the case. Do not all those who practise infant baptism, to be consistent, have to confess as much? Is not this faint beginning peculiar to all natural life? The seed planted in the soil begins its life at the faintest conceivable commencement: first, the warm, moist soil vitalizes the germ; God's chemistry, which we can not see

or understand, is at work; in due time that very small germ is brought to a stage wherein it receives the first faintest touch of vitality, and that vitality is all confined to the very small germ. Even that has not expanded enough to burst its own cerement; it has not yet started a root to seek for sustenance in the soil; it has merely a swollen appearance, and even its color has not changed. Yet that is life in the seed, life at its starting-point, life that ere long will appear in the tender "blade, and then the ear, after that, the full corn in the ear."

In the egg, life begins days before the incubation is completed, or the nestling is freed from the shell. The brooding of the parent bird caused "a coalescence of the substance of the egg," and quickened the crudely formed body; this was at first but the faintest possible evidence of life, a mere touch of it, a spark, a trembling, but it was real life in its commencement. This quickening occurs before the eyes can see, the wings can flutter, or the legs can move. So faint is it that it must be environed within the shell for days to come in order to receive additional development and strength to enable it to endure existence in its wider sphere.

So life in the human begins at the quickening period, and not at birth. That quickening is life to all intents and purposes; only at its feeblest stage, every advancing step of development is essentially like the first, the natural process taking advantage of each previous advancing one as a larger nucleus with which to increase itself.

Now if life in the vegetable and animal kingdoms uniformly begins at the faint period of quickening—the lowest conceivable stage—is it not reasonable to suppose that the far more delicate and impalpable quickening of the Spirit in regeneration may be begun so faintly that it must be unknown to us? That instead of that beginning being known,

it must commence at a point beyond consciousness and absolutely unknown to us? Is it not the unvarying method of the Creator that all life, physical or spiritual, must begin at the feeblest possible point of quickening, and from that develop into the higher and maturer? Is there any reason why the commencement of spiritual life should be an exception?

The fact that the divine life has been begun in the great majority of instances in those who were not conscious of either the time or place of its beginning, is of itself conclusive evidence that its beginning can be so feeble as to be absolutely imperceptible even to adults. Are not those mistaken who claim that they were conscious of the precise commencement of this regenerated life in their souls? That they experienced a great change at the exact time and place alleged is not denied; it may have been genuine; if genuine, it is no proof that it was the work of regeneration by the Spirit; it must have been an experience more advanced than that.

The strong probability is that such is the fact. If it were possible to know the exact moment of this regenerating work in the soul in one case, why not in all? And if in all, why do not the Scriptures reveal it as the best test of this work, instead of those tests they do give? Such as, "By their fruits ye shall know them," and "By this ye shall know that ye have passed from death unto life, because ye love the brethren." This silence of the Scriptures regarding this alleged test is conclusive proof that it is no test at all. The fact that the human consciousness is ignored by the Scriptures as affording any proof at regeneration is, if not proof positive, at least very strong evidence that this self-consciousness plays no part in the regenerating act, that the work is begun and completed back of consciousness. Any work within the soul that begins

beyond consciousness must necessarily be feeble, but is it feeble enough that even the infant may be a subject of it without the ordinary means of grace? Has the Creator provided for the quickening of the germ of the grain in the warm, moist soil, or the bird in the shell, or the babe in the womb, at such an exceedingly tender stage, and yet has He left the immortal soul of the already living infant to lie in helpless imbecility, to become the hapless prey of depravity until its intellect can dawn into consciousness, because, forsooth, the means of grace were beyond its reach? Nay, more, if the helpless germs in plant and bird and human can be taken from the remote state and advanced for days and even months before their quickening to a state wherein quickening is possible, why may not the Holy Spirit find in the already living infant a condition of soul that will make it possible for it to gain admission and bestow a regenerate life? This life, tho it be only objective in its character, is yet all-sufficient for the infant.

To conclude that the Savior of the world has made no provision for the infant until it can be baptized, or until the physical and mental part of man is so well advanced that one can think and choose for himself, is certainly not in keeping with the ordinary methods of an all-wise and merciful Creator. Certainly some provision has been made for spiritual life in the infant soul at the earliest possible period even without these. He who calls these little ones into being without their knowledge or consent, and thereby assumes His prerogative of Creator of accountable beings, would not suffer them to be born into an already condemned estate, unless He saw a way to redeem and rescue all of them in their earliest infancy. Neither would He suffer infants to remain the prey of depravity for months and even years simply because they could not be baptized; nor would He leave all those dying in infancy to become the prey

of death and hell. No; there must be some way of escape provided for them, and that way must be so comprehensive that it embraces all; it can not be so limited as to include only those that die or have been baptized. There must be some other way for the unbaptized and for all those who survive—heathen and Christian; some way whereby the Holy Spirit may impart its life, however faint or feeble the spiritual possibility may be in such a soul. This it must do without any invitation or active response upon the part of the infant, and without any more coercion or usurpation on the part of the Holy Spirit than there is when He regenerates the adults. In short, the infant's condition must be such as to welcome the Holy Spirit. The fetal soul must be as capable of quickening as the fetal body. If grace can reach the infant soul through baptism, who will deny that it can not without? Is it the prerogative of baptism to confer additional powers upon the infant, and thereby qualify it for its regeneration, or does baptism so hold sway over the Holy Spirit that He is helpless without it? Will the Infinite subject Himself to a means of grace so limited? This verily is subjecting the greater to the less. Neither assumption can be correct, for if Jesus could take infants in His arms and put His hands upon them and declare "Of such is the kingdom of heaven," it is extremely probable, to say the least, that the Comforter whom He sent into the world to do greater things than He did, also has some avenue to their souls by which He may approach and also bless them without the use of any of the ordinary means of grace. Furthermore, if Jeremiah and John the Baptist were recipients of this spiritual blessing before they were born; if Samuel from earliest infancy was the Lord's, and Timothy was hereditarily a child of grace, there seems to be no room left for doubt; for while they are the few recorded instances of this kind, it is but rea-

sonable to suppose that what was possible in their cases is also in a measure possible to all. At least we know by these that the operations of the Spirit are not absolutely bound by means of grace in the case of all infants. In these recorded ones of Jeremiah, John the Baptist, and Samuel, there must have been all that necessary feebleness in body and soul which characterizes all natural and spiritual life at so early a stage, and that feeble beginning also that is peculiar to the first operations of the Spirit upon the soul.

Seeing, then, that the commencement of this spiritual life may be so very faint, we have removed another great difficulty in the way of our progress. We can now look with increased hope toward finding "some other way" in advance of baptism by which the infant may be saved.

Additional light may be obtained from the law of heredity upon this phase of our subject. It is an undisputed fact that it is only at the commencement or conception of the infant's being that it is susceptible to certain hereditary characteristics which elevate or degrade, strengthen or weaken the subject; these have often far-reaching and permanent effects upon the character of individuals. It is taken for granted that because infants are unconscious even of existence itself, and in earliest infancy take notice of nothing, that therefore there is no avenue of approach to their souls by any extraneous influence. We should bear in mind, however, that this unconscious state is not the opposite of consciousness, but rather it is only consciousness imperceptibly developing into fulness and completeness. This is not by any means peculiar to the infant alone. The adult during the hours of slumber, or the sick often at certain stages of disease, lapse into an unconsciousness as deep, apparently, as that of the infant. Yet upon the restoration to wakefulness or health, consciousness returns again. It has

proved to be only a temporary lapse or suspension, and not a state the opposite of consciousness. Neither is the state of the infant the opposite of consciousness. It is therefore wrong on this account to suppose that this unconscious state is without any power to receive impressions of good or evil from any and all possible sources.

The law of heredity will throw much light upon this phase of the subject, and conclusively proves that good and evil impressions are made possible even long before birth, impressions which are indelible and which tell upon the character in all the after-years of life. That declaration of the first commandment, "I will visit the iniquity of the fathers upon the children unto the third and fourth generations of them that hate me, and show mercy unto thousands of them that love me and keep my commandments," is exactly in point here. Primarily this "visiting" does not refer to those outward judgments which Providence sent upon both old and young alike, by pestilence, famine, and sword; but rather to an inward hereditary effect upon the moral nature, and even the physical also.

Biologists do not give the preeminence to either parent in the matter of transmitting hereditary qualities, but speak of it as if the power pertained equally to both. In each family it might be possible to determine whether the mother's or the father's traits and qualities were most apparent in the children, but in a given number of families it is doubtful whether the advantage would fall to either side, so equally balanced is it.

When, however, the Scriptures allude to this subject the term "fathers" alone is employed, as for instance: "I will visit the iniquity of the *fathers* upon the children"; "Fill ye up the measure of your *fathers*"; "For in the like manner did their *fathers*"; "As your *fathers* did, so do ye"; etc.

The term fathers is used here in the sense of progenitors, and therefore mothers are also implied. The credit or the blame is doubtless intended by the Scriptures to rest upon the mother as well as the father. While both father and mother do transmit their qualities to their children, yet in the case of the father such transmission can not be later than conception. Yet how could this transmission be possible unless there was at this initial stage of existence the capacity to receive it? How could God visit this "iniquity" or this "mercy" except the possibility of appropriating either was already present? If present for such visitation, why not for the Holy Spirit's also? May not this "mercy" which He "will show to thousands," etc., comprehend the blessing of the Spirit?

It is evident that this "visiting" affects the spiritual nature as much as, if not more than, the physical. It was in this way sin was transmitted from Adam to his entire posterity. In this way "sin passed upon all men"; "for by the offense of one, judgment came upon all." The evil descends even from the time of conception; already, therefore, is there in the infant the capacity to receive both good and evil; for the transmission of either or both is necessarily dependent upon the capacity of the fetus to receive, just as much as upon the father and mother to transmit. These hereditary effects once introduced are permanent, and in due time assert themselves—some of them in predispositions which betray reckless extravagance and prodigality, base appetites and passions, stupid indifference to their own immoral or criminal conduct, ungovernable temper and greed; in short, a gross degeneracy which produces all the evil nature that makes possible the dark catalog of iniquities recorded in the first chapter of Romans. Others, again, inherit a decided predisposition to morality and virtue. These hereditary traits assert themselves in some

form throughout life; no matter what radical change may take place in the individual, it is impossible entirely to escape them. Some biologists classify hereditary laws under four heads, some under seven. In each case, whether they exhibit the traits or idiosyncrasies of the parents or grandparents or of others of kin even more remote, they all are the result of heredity. This is not the place to stop and offer apologies for Providence for this, except only to add that it must in the nature of man be so. We can not have life without its contrary, death. If we are to have morality, immorality becomes possible. Where there is virtue the possibility of the opposite must exist. To have heaven there must of necessity be a hell. To have mercy bestowed upon thousands of those that love God and keep His commandments we must have iniquity visited upon the third and fourth generations of them that hate Him. As the moral and physical universe is constituted, these contraries must of necessity exist.

No fact is more clearly established than that of heredity, and the strangest part of it is that all these hereditary mental and moral peculiarities exist in some mysterious manner from conception. The same law holds in the vegetable kingdom; the qualities of the oak exist mysteriously in the vital germ of the acorn before it begins to sprout and grow. There is not in that germ the fiber of the willow, the leaf of the chestnut, nor the sap of the fig-tree. No, each germ is hereditarily true to the parent oak in every particular. So in the tiny germ of mustard-seed, therein lie the qualities of root, stock, and leaf, with their peculiarities, all true to this law. Gardeners understand this so well that they purchase their seeds only of well-established reliable producers, in order to secure the best results. The soil, tho fertile, can not overcome defects within the germ of the seed; that germ must be as perfect as possible.

There must be no hereditary defects, or they will certainly betray themselves in the plant.

As with the acorn and the seed of vegetables, so with the germ of the egg; it possesses in embryo all the hereditary elements and characteristics of the coming bird. In that wonderful laboratory there is not only the head, body, legs, and wings, but even the feathers with all their shades, peculiarities, and varieties of color; there is all the beauty and variety of the plumage peculiar to the bird of paradise, or the sameness of that of the crow. There are also the differences of sex instinct and habit; the gentle disposition of the dove in one, the fierceness of the eagle in another. All these characteristics in some mysterious manner exist in embryo in the germ of the egg. They are as fixed and as real there as they are in the full-fledged bird. The most powerful microscope can not detect them, but they exist nevertheless.

As these instincts, habits, and different physical characteristics exist in embryo in the germ of the egg, even so the moral characteristics of man exist in embryo from conception. There are the varied peculiarities of taste, temperament, and talent, with all the different phases and degrees of depravity. There are also mental qualities of every degree: idiocy, mediocrity, talent, genius. All are there from the commencement, and they are sure to assert themselves later. The moment of conception is therefore not too early to inherit these. Indeed, it may be safely said that at no after-period in the life of a human being is there so much bestowed upon or denied the individual. It is, in a sense, the period of complete endowment. No additional faculties or talents are bestowed later. While conception is the period of complete endowment, yet the infant is still an undeveloped being, tho capable of development out of itself; nothing new is added; it is in em-

bryo all that it is subsequently to become. All that is necessary is the development of the characteristics which already exist, and a complete human being is the result.

A profound writer says: "Wherever the Holy Scriptures speak of the act of begetting and conception, as in Psalm li: 5, it speaks of it as of a fact to which is referred the beginning of the being and the threefold life of the whole man—of man absolutely and without exception entire; even the male or female sexuality is already distinguished according to Scripture in this moment of commencement (Job iii: 3; Luke i: 36).^{*} We also refer the reader to Job x: 8–21; Psalm cxxxix: 13–16; Eccl. xi: 5, and 2 Macc. vii: 22.

If the individual inherits all these qualities at the very commencement, it will not be denied that many of the peculiar traits and taints of character are also then received, or, in other words, that at this earliest possible period, the inception of life, God visits upon the children "the iniquity," or shows "mercy" according to the character of the parents.

What Scripture teaches, the comparatively modern science of biology confirms. One of its most eminent advocates says: "The child inherits many qualities from both parents. Heredity from the father is transmitted through the sperm cells; heredity from the mother through the egg cells. The new cell which is the rudiment of the child, the newly generated organism, originates in an actual amalgamation or coalescence of the two cells."[†]

If, as Haeckel says, the child inherits "many qualities from both parents," then those from the father must of necessity be inherited at conception; it could not be at a later period. A writer in a recent work, after citing many instances in proof, says: "A pious disposition is decidedly

^{*} Delitzsch, "Biblical Psychology," sec. viii., p. 247.

[†] Haeckel, "Evolution of Man," p. 176.

hereditary.”* This is in accord with the first commandment, or that part of it, rather, in which God assures us that “he will show mercy unto thousands of those who love him and keep his commandments.”

This hereditary transmission asserts itself in a great many ways, and affects the spiritual nature variously also. Different degrees of weakness or strength are exhibited in mind, will, and conscience. For instance, in some, even in childhood, the truth finds the heart hard like the “road-side”; in others, as the “stony ground”; in others, it is choked with “thorns”; in some there is found the “good soil.” All this, too, when the advantages of education and training may have been equal. It is true that “the kingdom of heaven is like unto a net that was cast into the sea and gathered of every kind,” good and bad; many of them hereditarily bad. Also some men have ten talents, others five, some one. The truth finds a vast difference among its hearers. To some it commends itself at once, to others slowly, with difficulty, and very imperfectly, or not at all. This inequality the Scriptures recognize. The Savior in some of His parables refers to it. Some of this is to be accounted for by the evil habits acquired later in life, but much is due to hereditary qualities of mind and soul. Doubtless the carefully kept genealogies from Adam to Moses, and the yet more extended one of Christ, receive much of their significance in the light of this fact of heredity.

The Old-Testament Scriptures contain a number of passages which are calculated to impress the reader with the truth that heredity played an important part in framing Jewish destiny. In the eleventh chapter of 1 Kings, also in the thirty-second and thirty-fourth verses of the thirteenth chapter, we read that God for “His servant David’s

* Galton, “Hereditary Genius,” p. 274.

sake" would restrain the hand of Jeroboam, and permit Rehoboam to continue as king over Judah and Benjamin. So the Prophet Isaiah (xxxvii: 35) assures us that God for His own sake, and for His "*servant David's sake*," would not permit Sennacherib's army to destroy Jerusalem. In both these instances the piety of David descended for four centuries; while it can not be claimed that it was directly through heredity, yet God showed this mercy upon Israel and David's descendants because of his faithfulness. The reverse of this course in Providence follows in the wake of the career of the abandoned Manasseh. Pestilence, sword, famine, and captivity await his descendants. Swords are to slay them, dogs to tear them, and "the fowls of heaven and the beasts of the earth to devour and destroy. And I will cause them to be removed into all the kingdoms of the earth *because of Manasseh*, the son of Hezekiah, for that which he did in Jerusalem" (Jer. xv: 2, 3, 4).

Also in the following chapter, after rehearsing woes similar to those in the preceding chapter, which shall befall Israel and Judah, the Lord assures them through the prophet that in their despair "they shall say unto thee, Wherefore hath the Lord pronounced all this great evil against us? or what is our iniquity? or what is our sin, that we have committed against the Lord our God? Then shalt thou say unto them, Because your fathers have forsaken me, and have not kept my law, and ye have done worse than your fathers," etc. (Jer. xvi: 10, 11, 12).

While these woes are not directly charged to heredity, yet we must infer that they are in good part the legitimate fruit of it, since the iniquity of the fathers descended upon the children, and the woes were sent in consequence.

The Prophet Jeremiah (xxxii: 18) is more to the point: "Thou shewest loving-kindness unto thousands, and recompensest the iniquity of the fathers into the bosom of their

children after them." The sweep of heredity is much broader and more enduring in the case of parents who love God than in those who do not, as is taught by the first commandment; while "iniquity" extends but to "the third and fourth generations of those that hate God," "mercy" is shown unto "thousands of those that love him."

But aside from the Scriptures, this matter of heredity is so well understood at the present time that no intelligent person will dispute it. There are many well-authenticated instances furnished by medical and biological writers. The names of depraved parents are given whose descendants for four generations have been the victims of epilepsy, idiocy, and insanity; or have become drunkards, paupers, criminals, and harlots, not a few of them prepossessed with a homicidal mania. These proclivities were not confined to a few of their descendants, but to a large proportion of them. Such instances are so numerous that it is not necessary to do more than allude to them. The fact, then, is clearly established that, from the very commencement of our being we possess and enjoy the capacity to receive radical qualities in our mental, moral, and physical constitutions.

In view of what heredity can do, is it reasonable to suppose that the Holy Spirit would be compelled to stand off in an attitude of neutrality because any spiritual work He might accomplish for the infant would necessarily be of a coercive character, and therefore a violation of its moral nature? On this account is it necessary that the way be first prepared by baptism, or that the Spirit wait until the child is old enough to come to the knowledge of the truth? Are we not presumptuous to an unpardonable degree in assuming that the Holy Spirit is compelled to wait even a day for any exterior influence or means before He can come to the rescue of the infant's soul? If, as Galton says,

"a pious disposition is decidedly hereditary," what is to hinder the influence of the Holy Spirit? Must that impressible nature be left within the reach of all the evil influences without exception, while the Holy Spirit is excluded except to the baptized infant? Shall that nature be effectually barred against His beneficent work, and only His work? Shall the hereditary mercy, which God has promised to "the children of thousands of those who love him and keep his commandments," stand aloof from infancy because the infant is too feeble or is not baptized? Or must the loving-kindness which Jeremiah assures us God will show unto thousands be withheld from infancy while the iniquity of the fathers may come upon them? No, the "iniquity" and the "mercy," or "loving-kindness," have equal privileges with the infant. If old enough for evil it is old enough for divine grace. One is as hereditary as the other. Why, then, should it be thought a thing impossible for the Holy Spirit to bestow even saving grace upon it? It is not reasonable to suppose that the merciful Father of helpless infants would leave them exposed to evil just because they were out of the reach of baptism. Let us then continue our search and see if we can not find some avenue for grace to their souls besides baptism. This much is clear, that as early as conception both good and evil hereditarily endow the subject.

It is a fact that the Scriptures do not excuse those who inherit hereditary defects for any of the wickedness that results from their conduct. These persons are apparently as responsible as others who are more highly favored. "As your fathers did, so do ye," are the stinging words of reproach uttered by the Savior Himself in the ears of the hypocrites of His day. He makes no apology, either for the language or the hypocrites who provoked it. Tho they did have such fathers and inherited their evil traits, they

were nevertheless responsible for their own conduct. As with these Pharisees, so in every generation, there have been multitudes set at a great disadvantage by their hereditary defects. Yet their lot is cast among the more favored ones. The ill-favored with one talent are required to accept the same conditions, to stand the same tests, and to overcome the same foes that their more highly endowed brothers are. So far as we can judge, the Scriptures offer no excuse for failure. True, they have similar outward advantages and privileges to their brothers, but the disparity in moral qualities is so great that the race is seemingly a very unequal one. Even after leaving much of this inequality and disparity to the justice of the great Judge at the day of reckoning, yet such as fail are lost. How much is due to hereditary weakness is not for us to determine.

Now is there no way to lift the veil and disclose the mercy and wisdom of the merciful Father in such instances as these? Is there not after all some provision made for the hereditarily unfortunate which serves to make amends in good part for this inequality and neutralizes these evil hereditary defects, so that, so far as God is concerned, the case is not so bad as it at first seems? And have not these weak ones more, after all, in common with the strong than is supposed?

The fact is established that even before they were born they are hereditarily the subjects of good as well as of evil influences. May not the Holy Spirit Himself be among the good influences, and by His prerogative counterbalance most of the evils of heredity? The Savior's own language—"Of such is the kingdom of heaven"—is a most positive declaration, and teaches that infants are embraced in the gracious arms of redemption so effectually that, if death should come to them, they would be saved. If they are in

a saved state in infancy in this respect at least they are all on an equality, and hereditary evils can not counterbalance the Spirit's beneficent effects. With this common heritage for all infants the disparity on account of heredity is not so great as at first it might seem. There is also far greater responsibility resting upon the less favored ones than they might be disposed to believe, even to the extent that they are left "without excuse," as the Scriptures teach. This mode of reasoning from heredity may not amount to a demonstration of the claim that infants may be reached by the Holy Spirit without baptism, but it makes it extremely probable that such is the fact. For if infants even at conception have the capacity to receive the peculiar, and, in a sense, extra qualities of heredity, both good and bad, it certainly is reasonable to suppose that they also have the capacity to receive the life-giving power of the Holy Spirit. But as this is simply preparatory for the argument that is to follow, no further advantage will be taken of this at present, except to draw this weighty logical inference: by heredity the infant is compelled to receive before it can either choose to accept or reject. We ask the reader to bear this in mind.

It will not be amiss to pursue this mode of reasoning still further; more evidence along this line will render it easier to carry conviction when we come to the direct proof. There are also effects produced in the infant after heredity has done its work that will not only furnish food for reflection, but will also afford good reason to believe that infants may be subjects of saving grace without the use of the means thereof.

CHAPTER XIX

LIGHT FROM THE PRENATAL LIFE OF THE INFANT—THE RELATION OF THE INFANT TO SAVING GRACE

IF, upon investigation, it is found that during this prenatal period the infant is the subject of good and evil impressions as enduring as life, there will be good reason to believe that it is susceptible to the power of saving grace also. For surely those faculties which are capable of receiving either good or evil impressions during gestation ought at the same time be capable of receiving spiritual ones. The fact that heredity can leave its impressions upon the child is *prima facie* evidence that during the entire prenatal period also the fetus is subjected to good or evil influences. It is evident that it is subject to development as a complete individual, mentally, morally, and physically, and this alone should be sufficient to establish the fact that it is the subject of influences without itself, as well as of such as inhere within its own being. Development on all these lines is as common during gestation as it is after it is born into the world. The faculties already possessed in embryo begin to undergo changes which are not in all cases those of development simply. There are certain modifications or changes, even from influences that are extraordinary and casual, and wholly independent of the mother as a mere maternal being.

The Scriptures do not hesitate to teach that, during the period of gestation, great care is necessary on the part of the mother lest evil consequences should follow. God

sent His angel to Manoah's wife to instruct her in what she should not do during the prenatal period of her child, Samson. "Now therefore beware, I pray thee, and drink not wine, nor strong drink, and eat not any unclean thing" (Judges xiii:4). In the fourteenth verse the angel forbids "anything that cometh of the vine" also. They also teach that during this period of gestation the Holy Spirit had set apart and possessed certain ones, who after their birth gave proof even of a spiritual change, to wit, Jeremiah and John the Baptist.

It is not illogical to assume that what the Holy Spirit has done in a few recorded instances, He has also done in hosts of others, since there can be nothing arbitrary in His operations. There are only a few such instances recorded in the Holy Scriptures, but these are all that are necessary; we could not reasonably expect more, since the design of a book like the Bible does not require frequent mention of such, any more than it would require the mention of the names of all the patriarchs and prophets with all their deeds and utterances. If it is possible for the Holy Spirit during the prenatal life of Jeremiah and John the Baptist radically to change them, is it not equally possible for Him to do so in every instance where the same conditions are present? To assume that no others were as pious as the parents of these is unwarranted and unreasonable. Certainly other parents were as remarkable for their piety as Jeremiah's and John's; therefore the mention in the Bible of their early sanctification does not bar us from assuming that others were also sanctified from the womb.

If, therefore, the Holy Scriptures teach that the Spirit has during gestation sanctified a few infants, why should it be considered a thing impossible that He should sanctify many in every generation? He never operates arbitrarily, but according to spiritual law. Are we not safe in assu-

ming that the same conditions have been present in hosts of other instances, and that very many unborn infants have become partakers of the same sanctifying grace?

Medical science teaches that mothers should exercise the greatest care during the period of gestation, chiefly because of the effect that their state of mind and body will have upon the fetus; that there is danger that the ordinary process of development may be interfered with and something abnormal result.

It is a matter of common observation that children of the same parents, born within a few years, or even less, of each other, are possessed of very different temperaments, talents, and dispositions. They are even unlike their parents often. This can not be due to heredity alone, else the children should closely resemble each other. It is a fact that virtuous parents, with long lines of worthy progenitors, sometimes bring forth immoral and even vicious children, while parents who are gross, and even vulgar, sometimes beget children who are refined, moral, and religious. This is not generally true, but sometimes it occurs.

How are we to account for these sporadic cases except by inferring that there are other forces at work besides heredity which during gestation can and do produce such remarkable results that even hereditary traits are, if not canceled by them, at least so modified as not to be recognizable?

Ædœologists assure us that this prenatal change may be produced by the mother. Her environment may be so favorable or unfavorable, and her temperament so readily influenced thereby, that in some instances all the extremes indicated, whether mental, moral, or physical, may be permanently effected in the character and constitution of the unborn child.

The late Fordyce Barker, M.D., LL.D., one of the most eminent physicians that this country has produced, was a firm believer in this prenatal influence. He also instances food, medicines, poisons, diseases, and severe fright as possessing such influences. "Sudden emotions of any kind," writes Dr. Britton, "are remarkable examples of electrotyping on the sensitive surfaces of living forms."

Spurzheim also affirms that the innate constitution of each individual is due in part to the mother during the prenatal period.

Carpenter, Combe, Bichat, and others undertake to account for this influence, and do not write of it as if it was anything extraordinary; but, on the other hand, as if it should be expected; and therefore they urge that every precaution be taken for it so that a beneficent instead of a harmful issue may result.

"The effects of war and like disasters have long been noted for their decided effects upon the fetus," as in "the siege of Landau in 1793," "the results of the French Revolution," and "the siege of Antwerp." "Many of the children born when the horrors of the French Revolution were at their highest, turned out to be weak, nervous, irritable, and liable to insanity."*

Plato advised that mothers during the period of gestation should be most carefully preserved from excessive pleasures and pains, and that they should cultivate gentleness, benevolence, and kindness.

The Spartans were noted for the attention paid to their wives during gestation. The laws of Lycurgus required this.

Beyond assuring the reader that this prenatal influence is accepted by medical science, we need not press this matter. Those seeking additional light can readily find it in

*Sydney B. Elliott, in *Arena*, pp. 422, 423, March, 1894.

works upon ædœology by Winchester, Elliott, and others; also in various medical journals. It will not be denied that the prenatal period is one of great importance to the unborn child because of the effects then produced and their bearing upon its after-life and character.

The Scriptures, besides instancing Jeremiah and John the Baptist, do not hesitate to record Jacob's experiment—if such it may be called—with Laban's cattle. In the thirtieth chapter of Genesis we have a most striking example of this mysterious influence of outward objects upon the dams of Laban's herd and their offspring. We have nothing in the Scriptures of like means producing corresponding results upon unborn children, but we are told of the remarkable momentary effect which the salutation of Mary had upon the unborn babe of Elizabeth (Luke i:44). This effect is equally as remarkable as if it had produced some permanent prenatal result; indeed, we are not sure that it did not.

Then with the evidence from medical science and that from Scripture, the cases of Jeremiah and John, the babe of Elizabeth, before us, we are safe in asserting that the period of gestation is subject to other influences than those of ordinary development, that the unborn child is affected by other and exterior influences, both good and evil.

But while we are assured that in some instances the Holy Spirit has wrought its work of regeneration as early as the period of gestation, and from these instances could safely infer that many more have been similarly dealt with, yet we can not infer that such is the case with every unborn child. We can not in this way discover a general law by which we can safely conclude that this is true in all cases. The only deduction we can make is that a general result is not impossible so far as we can see. It may be true in all cases, and that such is the fact is very probable since it is

possible. If unborn children have been susceptible in some instances to the operations of the Holy Spirit, why may they not be in all? Since He does not in all cases have to wait until the child is born or is baptized, why should He have to wait in any? Since extreme helplessness is no barrier to the operations of the Holy Spirit in some cases, why should it be in any? Again, it may be asked: If the unborn child can receive radical changes affecting its moral character through life, does not this prove that there is the capacity to receive these impressions before it is born? Why should it then be thought a thing impossible for the Holy Spirit to bear His part with other agencies in this work also? This much at least is true, it is extremely probable that He does bear some part in bringing about some of the changes wrought during the prenatal period.

But we must not prejudice the reader by claiming too much from this, nor should we stop until we have sought and found a sound basis upon which to establish a general law which will warrant the conclusion that all infants are saved, a law by which we may understand why the Savior could say: "Of such is the kingdom of heaven." In our pursuit of this law it is pertinent that we should first understand what relation the infant sustains to saving grace. If this can be found, then, and only then, is the way prepared for us to search for it. This we shall now undertake.

But before doing this the attention of the reader is again called to the fact that the inference previously drawn—to wit, that the infant is compelled to receive before it can choose to accept or reject—is strengthened and confirmed by the fact that during gestation it is the subject of good and evil influences.

In order to have as clear an understanding as possible of the subject of infant salvation, one fact must be borne in mind; that is, while the infant is with the responsible

adult also "concluded in unbelief," and the infant must be saved by grace, if saved at all, nevertheless it stands in all other respects in a very different relation to saving grace from that of the guilty sinner. The infant has never transgressed the law of God; the adult has. The one has an evil nature and an inclination to evil, but has never indulged it; the other has done so. The one has not the knowledge of God's Word, and therefore could not knowingly offend; the other has that knowledge, and has offended God. The infant has all the mental and spiritual faculties of the adult, but they have never come into exercise; they are alive but inactive as the germ in the unplanted grain. All of them are in an unconscious, irresponsible state. Their possessor is innocent notwithstanding these depraved tendencies. So long as this state continues, the infant can do neither good nor evil—nothing to save or damn itself. It is heir-apparent to the complete endowment of responsibility, but not in any proper sense is it in responsible possession of it. It, therefore, when compared with the adult, stands in very different relations to God and His grace. Hence, while the adult class of the unsaved is commanded to "repent," "believe," and be "converted" in order to be regenerated, not a word of the kind can be found addressed to infants. These commands are absolutely essential in the case of the adult unbeliever, but for infants they are not needed. Why they are not needed is because inborn depravity is yet in a dormant state in the infant, and has not wrought in it that rebellion to God that is in the adult. In other words, actual sin is necessary before active belief, repentance, and conversion are.

It is clear, therefore, that the infant stands in a much more favorable relation to saving grace than the wilful sinner. Repentance is not required of it because it has no wilful sin to repent of, and original sin does not require

repentance, so that its inability to repent is no barrier to its salvation; therefore it needs no repentance to enter the kingdom of heaven.

For the same reason it needs no *conversion*. We use the word conversion in the synergistic sense, as the Scriptures also use it. Using it in this manner, it is more nearly allied with repentance than with regeneration, because repentance like conversion requires the active cooperation of the penitent with the Holy Spirit, while regeneration is the work of the Holy Spirit alone.

That conversion is more nearly allied with penitence than with regeneration the following passages prove: Matt. xiii:15: "For this people's heart is waxed gross, and their ears are dull of hearing, and their eyes have they closed, lest at any time they should see with their eyes, and hear with their ears, and should understand with their heart, and should be converted, and I should heal them." The healing follows conversion. The sinner cooperates with the Holy Spirit in conversion, but not in regeneration.

Also Mark iv:12: "That seeing they may see and not perceive; and hearing they may hear and not understand; lest at any time they should be converted and their sins should be forgiven them."

Luke xii:40: "He hath blinded their eyes and hardened their hearts; that they should not see with their eyes, nor understand with their hearts, and be converted, and I should heal them."

Also Acts xxviii:27: "Lest they should see with their eyes, and hear with their ears, . . . and should be converted, and I should heal them."

In each of these verses the healing or forgiveness follows conversion which is synergistic. This allies conversion with penitence rather than with regeneration, which is the work of the Holy Ghost alone.

We read also in Acts iii: 19: "Repent ye, therefore, and be converted, that your sins may be blotted out when the times of refreshing shall come from the presence of the Lord." Repentance and conversion combine to secure the pardon of sins. Conversion and regeneration are often used synonymously; this is wrong, since conversion is more nearly allied with repentance than with regeneration. It is the result of the human will cooperating with the Holy Spirit, while regeneration is the unaided work of the Holy Spirit. The new version translates the word *epistrepho*, "to turn," and "to turn again," in every place except in the epistle of James, where it is translated "convert." This turning in conversion is necessarily the act of the will aided by the Spirit, and it must therefore precede regeneration, which is the Holy Spirit's work alone. This view of conversion agrees with the passages quoted.

The human part of sound conversion necessarily requires a conscious, responsible, active state on the part of the sinner; and therefore is not possible for the infant. If conversion is not possible for the infant, then if saved at all, it must be without it, as it manifestly is. There is also positive Scripture proof of the assertion that the infant does not need conversion in order to become the subject of the regenerating power of the Holy Spirit. It is that drawn from the words of the Savior. He said to His adult hearers: "Except ye be converted, and become as little children, ye shall in no case enter the kingdom of heaven." Little children do not need conversion, but the adult does, that he may become as these little ones already are. This fact, therefore, is well established, that the infant stands in a much more favorable relation to God and to saving grace than the wilful sinner, since repentance and conversion, two impossible steps in the way to its regeneration, are not necessary for it, while they are indispensable for the adult,

who, even after he has repented and has been converted, has only "become as little children" already are.

It is true then that while the infant can not repent or become converted, neither repentance nor conversion is necessary for its regeneration. This fact also proves that neither repentance nor conversion need necessarily precede a work of grace in the soul, except in the case of the adult, when they are necessary only because of wilful sin. In the infant they have no work of preparation to perform, because there is no actual transgression. This much is clear: if the infant can be regenerated, then repentance and conversion need not precede that work in its case, or become in any sense necessary to it. Is there anything strange in this? Do not all those theories respecting election and baptism, Calvinistic, German Reformed, Lutheran, and Arminian, take it for granted that infants are regenerated without repentance or conversion?

So far, at least, two difficult barriers—repentance and conversion—are out of the way. There yet remains to be considered the great fact of regeneration itself; it having been stripped of all attending conditions, is left to stand alone. Much advantage has been gained in this; with only this one isolated obstacle in the way, we can now concentrate all attention on that. Is regeneration possible for the infant? Does it require intelligence and the act of the will?

In an attempt of this kind it will not do to deal in surmises based upon interpretations of disputed passages of Scripture, or such theories as have grown out of traditional or modern systems of theology, such, for instance, as Cyprian's, that baptism as if by magic regenerates; or as Augustine's, which regards baptism and the prayers of parents or sponsors essential; or as Zwingli's view, which holds that original sin was simply a misfortune, therefore

infants would be saved with or without baptism; or as Stier's, that baptism plants the germ from which saving faith is to grow; or as Delitzsch's, that infants have germinal faith, which baptism first touches with a regenerated life; or as the theory of the Antipedobaptists, who teach that the necessary work of grace is effected in the infant immediately after its death. These, with numerous other surmises which we need not here mention, are not in harmony with the object in view. An effort will therefore be made to keep clear of them all, and prove, if possible, that, independent of baptism, the infant may be regenerated by the Holy Spirit before it dies, possibly before it is born. The exact moment or period in the infant's life that this may occur we shall not attempt to point out. That of necessity belongs to the unknown and unknowable. This much has been established, that the infant's relations to saving grace are much more favorable than the adult's. The two most difficult steps to it in the adult's case are not necessary for the infant, as it has no actual sin.

CHAPTER XX

CAN THE UNBAPTIZED INFANT BE REGENERATED? THE
INFANT RECEIVES BEFORE IT CAN ACCEPT OR REJECT.
—CAN THE HOLY SPIRIT HAVE ACCESS TO ITS SOUL?

THE chief difficulty in proving that the infant may be regenerated is the one which springs from its helpless condition in relation to the Holy Spirit and in the supposed inability of the Spirit to bestow the new life without some medium through which it may be brought into contact with the unconscious infant's soul. How can He come unassisted and even uninvited by either the infant, the parent, the Word, or baptism, and perform His saving work? Would not that regeneration be too coercive in its character for a responsible being which would be effected without the use of the means? Would it not be contrary to the ordinary operations of the Spirit and do violence to the spiritual nature of the infant if it should ignore everything, and, unassisted, effect its saving work in the soul?

It may be safely affirmed that there is no more violence done the infant in such a case than there is when a parent presents the child for baptism. The parent does not consult the child; but in a sense forcibly presents it. There is as much coercion in this case as in the other. But the objector replies: in baptism the appointed means of grace are employed; true, but the infant does not sanction their use. Admit that the Scriptures authorize it, still that does not clear away the difficulty to the human mind. There is as much coercion in the commonly received practise of in-

fant baptism as there is in the view that the Holy Spirit can enter the infant soul unaided by baptism and the pious offices of the believer. So far as we can understand, this is true of adult sinners. Without their consent we pray for them, and we believe our prayers are heard. How? Who can tell? But if they are answered, is it not of the nature of coercion?

This, therefore, is true, that the will of the infant is no more ignored, and there is no more usurpation or coercion when the Holy Spirit enters the infant soul without the aid of baptism, than when baptism is employed, since the will of the subject is not consulted in either case, and can not be. But the truth is, there can be no coercion in any true sense without consciousness in the subject. This mode of reasoning, however, can only call an opponent's attention to the fact that his own theory is not free from objections and may serve to restrain his antagonism. But that is all; it does not clear away the mist, nor remove the difficulties of the case in hand.

Let us see what can be done toward overcoming these.

There must be kept in mind the fact that the innocence of the infant will not save its soul, neither would repentance and forgiveness. They are not of themselves sufficient. It is the new life of Christ in the soul which follows these; in other words, it is regeneration that saves. Can the infant, having no need of forgiveness because it has no actual sin to wash away, be regenerated without coercion? The mere fact of regeneration is simplified very much when we strip it of all its antecedents and see the difference between the adult sinner's relation to it and that of the infant.

In the adult we associate regeneration with such truths as: "Except ye repent, ye shall all likewise perish"; "Repent ye and be converted, that your sins may be blotted

out"; "Repent ye, and believe the Gospel"; "With the heart man believeth unto righteousness," etc. These passages, and others containing similar conditions, are quoted as prescribing the necessary steps which in all cases precede regeneration. Many do not stop to consider that such preliminary steps are not required of the infant. The simple work of regeneration, and that alone, is necessary; that can not be dispensed with, that the infant must have. Can it be regenerated? *

In attempting to show that the infant may be regenerated without the use of the ordinary means of grace, and without violence to its spiritual nature, we will gain additional light by keeping in view the fact that regeneration is the work of the Holy Spirit alone. He in this work neither seeks nor requires the cooperation of the human subject, whether that subject be an adult or infant. The divine hand alone is enlisted in the new creation. It is so far beyond mere human power that no share whatever of it can be performed by human help, nor is human aid expected to participate. This will be made to appear as we progress, so that it is not necessary to stop here to prove it. In fact, it is recognized by most theologians that the work of regeneration is monergistic. The cooperation of the human soul ceases with conversion. Synergism ends with this, and monergism there commences. The fact that regeneration is wrought by the Holy Spirit alone enables the infant to stand on an equal footing with the adult in this particular. Neither is required to participate—one is as helpless to do so as the other. The infant is at no greater disadvantage nor is more helpless than the adult.

* Let it be understood that we use the term regeneration here in the sense of mere saving grace, not in that fuller meaning which associates it with active belief and repentance, and which is possible only for the adult; an objective regeneration, not subjective.

Therefore if the Holy Spirit alone regenerates the adult, it can the infant also, since neither is required to be active. Both are helpless. All potency is in the divine agent.

We know also that all that is required is that the soul of the adult be brought into the passive state through active belief and penitence. No sooner does it reach this state than the Holy Spirit regenerates it. There is no invasion or coercion in such regeneration of the adult; his passivity has made them unnecessary. The Holy Spirit is welcomed by that condition.

Now if it can be proven that the infant is by nature in this same passive condition as the penitent adult, then its regeneration is just as possible as the adult's, since nothing can keep the Holy Spirit from the passive soul. And it also results that all regeneration is without violence or coercion.

Before we advance it may be well at this place to recapitulate. The infant has capacity for grace. It occupies a vantage-ground because it does not need repentance or conversion to prepare it for regeneration. It need not hear the Word, or actively believe, because it has no wilful sin. Spiritual life may begin, as does the natural life, at the faintest conceivable point, that of mere quickening, so that the feeble state of the infant need be no barrier. The infant is a fully endowed being, tho its spiritual faculties are only in embryo. Heredity finds in the infant at the moment of conception a capacity to receive not simply its normal gifts, but in addition to these others also which are special and peculiar. This capacity to receive before it can accept or reject and before it can be baptized is worthy of special notice. It is proof of a decidedly passive condition of some sort, and it may be just the kind the Holy Spirit requires in the adult in order to regenerate him. During the prenatal period in many instances radical im-

pressions are made which are indelibly stamped upon the character. If by heredity, evil is transmitted from Adam to his posterity; and if during gestation also, both good and evil effects are produced by their respective agents, is it not likely that God also has some way by which He may regenerate infants? This much we must grant, that it is very likely that such is the fact.

As we advance let us take advantage of a fact that has been proven so far as heredity and prenatal life are concerned. It is this: There is in the infant the capacity to receive both good and evil before it has the power to accept or reject either and before it can be baptized. Its soul does not possess a state of lofty independence which secures it from their encroachments. Good and evil are the potters. The infant is the tempered clay to be molded by them to honor or dishonor. Evil insists that the entail of Adam's transgression, together with "the iniquities of the fathers unto the third and fourth generation," shall be secured by it in every instance; while to the good, God Himself shows mercy unto thousands of their infants. The feebleness and unconsciousness peculiar to infancy invite rather than repel the encroachments of good and evil. It can not be said that they coerce the infant, because coercion in a moral sense could not be possible without consciousness, but it is forced to accept the ministrations of good or evil or both in some mysterious manner without either its knowledge or consent. This is passivity of some sort and of a most remarkable character, and it exists before baptism is possible.

The infant's soul is also capable of development, and this development is due to the inherent qualities of its nature only in part, for those qualities are affected externally by influences even beyond the mother which in some manner affect her, and through her the fetus. These influences assist in the development of the child without consulting

it, and, regardless of good or evil consequences, may work even radical effects upon the unborn child, so that its whole after-life and character may be seriously changed on their account. In addition to heredity, we find that close upon its entail other influences begin to affect the moral, and doubtless the spiritual, nature of the child to be. Bear in mind this is all before there is any power of acceptance or rejection possible in the subject. It becomes receptive before it can accept or reject or be baptized. This fact all those who practise infant baptism, as well as those who do not, must admit. Indeed, all those who profess to believe that all infants are saved must also admit it in case they die. Without doubt, the divine hand has set metes and bounds to this invasion, particularly when evil influences operate, so that no soul shall be absolutely victimized by them; but these agencies do nevertheless affect the unconscious soul of the infant from conception till birth, and even through the tenderest conceivable periods of its infancy. But we are taught (Rom. v : 20), "Where sin abounded grace did much more abound." So, doubtless, it is the case with unborn and unconscious infants; the power of grace over them is superior to that evil so that it can not victimize them. For aught we know the evil influences of the fall through heredity and the prenatal period would find them easy victims, but for the fact that "grace much more abounds"; and thus controls and counteracts the evil during this unconscious period, so that infants are not left defenseless and unshielded from the cruel darts of the enemy. But if you presume this much you are forced to admit that the Holy Spirit is the Prime Minister of this grace, and therefore is the only power that can effectually shield them. There must therefore be left for Him some way of access to the field of this otherwise unequal contest, and of this He is not slow to avail Himself.

Here, however, is not the place to step aside and attempt to show how this can be legitimately done. Such discussion must wait for its proper point of introduction, which will come before long. For the present we only ask the reader to bear in mind that the infant, even from its fetal state, is a complete individual, and is already in possession of the same qualities of mind and soul that it will possess as an adult; that these qualities are yet in embryo, but they are present, ranging anywhere from the ordinary to the extraordinary, mentally from idiocy to genius, and morally from one talent to ten; and that all these are often seriously and even radically affected by heredity and prenatal influences with peculiar characteristics and idiosyncrasies, which may be good or evil in tendency.

The great law of heredity has decreed that it should be so, and its apparently despotic will has been executed. Its decrees antedate consciousness itself; the consent of its subject is never sought or secured. After heredity other agents operate, if not so despotically yet as freely after their manner, upon it. Along with these there are doubtless spiritual agencies at work also, both before and after birth. Meanwhile, there is a response of some kind on the infant's part to these agencies, for they aid in its development; it expands under their manipulation. Each day some progress is made, some development, some growth. Tho the period of consciousness and the age of responsibility are yet a good way off, still this receiving, developing, and growing continue unabated, and as progress is made by the infant, so also is there progress in these external influences and their effects. This mysterious and apparently arbitrary and despotic process continues even up to the dawn of absolute responsibility.

All this is done for the infant unasked, and even unaided by it, or by any of the means of grace. All this while it

is compelled to receive without the power on its part either to accept or reject.

A few observations will be in place here. If the accepted views of infant salvation are sound, then several difficulties or incongruities suggest themselves:

First. With reference to God. He brings responsible beings into existence, and before they can accept or reject they become the passive victims of depravity and attendant evils, and except the few that are baptized, they are left by Him without adequate means of rescue. The Holy Spirit must stand aloof, while evil has easy access to the infant soul. The power to damn is free to operate, while the power to save is not. For God to leave a receptive and helpless soul to become the victim of evil, places His character in a very unfavorable light. Why is evil free to deprave and taint while the Holy Spirit and saving grace are so shackled that they must stand aloof and wait for baptism? That God would be responsible for such a deplorable state of affairs is not reasonable.

Second. This places the Holy Spirit in an unfavorable light. Evil is free to operate—even moral agencies may offer a partial assistance without baptism—but the Great Comforter, the Holy Ghost, sent into the world to counteract evil, is forced to ignore a passive infant because, forsooth, baptism is not or can not be administered. This is so incongruous that it is incredible. Here is a subject so passive and receptive that evil agents are at liberty to operate upon it without the aid of anything; but the infinite Spirit of God—the Prime Minister of saving grace—is entirely helpless to save until baptism is administered or death intervenes. The Comforter sent to save must stand idly by while evil is active to destroy. It can not be. This limits “the Holy One of Israel.” It is not so.

Third. Saving grace is placed in a false light also.

Under a redemption that is for all, grace is so hedged about by one of its own means that it is helpless until the means is provided. Bad economy indeed. Tho there is grace enough for all, tho it abounds "much more" than sin, yet it is so limited by one of its own means that comparatively few are saved. This grace, which "much more abounds" than sin and must be greater than all its means combined, is paralyzed for want of one of them. This is the economy that the greater is subjected to the less. Bad economy indeed.

Now that the fact is fully established that the infant receives before it can accept or reject, it is proposed to take advantage of it in proving that the Holy Spirit has access to the souls of all infants without the aid of the means of grace, and that He also ministers saving grace to them.

Can the Holy Spirit have access to the infant soul without baptism?

The next step necessary will be to ascertain whether this passivity in the infant is of a kind that makes it possible for the Holy Spirit to find access without baptism to the infant's receptive soul and renew it. It is proposed to pursue this at length in the firm belief that it can be proven beyond a doubt. It is highly improbable, to say the least, that the Spirit's influence should be excluded entirely, while all other agencies are free to act as far as the capacity of the infant can suffer them. If there is capacity in the infant's receptive soul for these finite agents, so that they have the power to stamp their impress upon it, is it possible that the infinite Holy Spirit is powerless to act without baptism? If the door is open to evil, what shuts it against that grace which abounds "much more" than sin? In what sense can grace "much more abound," if that be so; or, rather, of what benefit is it to the infant with all its abundance, if grace is compelled to stand in utter helpless-

ness and leave sin prey unchecked by it upon all those infants who are unbaptized? Why are evil agents turned loose to prepossess all this territory, finding it passive to their destructive work, while the Holy Spirit is entirely helpless in spite of this passivity until baptism prepares the way? In other words, how is it that the passive infant possesses a nature receptive only of moral and evil influences, while there is left no possible approach for the spiritual influence of the Holy Ghost?

Is it reasonable that there is left the Holy Spirit no other avenue than the means of grace afford to the souls of infants, while antagonistic forces have an open field in which they without means can act? Must these helpless ones be receptive of soul-destroying evil, or cold moral influences only, while the warm, life-giving power of the Holy Ghost stands at this open door seeking admission, but finding none?

It can not be that the infant is left so exposed by a merciful Creator to evil, while no saving agent comes to guard it against the spoiler or secures its deathless soul from inevitable ruin because it is not baptized. No, God has not forsaken the unbaptized utterly; it can not be so, it is not so, for while "sin abounds, grace much more abounds." While He does "visit the iniquity of the fathers upon the children unto the third and fourth generations of those that hate him," He also "shows mercy unto thousands of those that love him and keep his commandments." There is saving grace in that "mercy."

For aught we know, the evil influences of the fall through heredity and the prenatal period would find the infant an easy victim but for the fact that grace is more abundant than sin, and through this greater abundance it counteracts the effects of depravity during this unconscious period. Evidently some stress must be laid upon the fact that grace

is so abundant. As generally interpreted, so many restraints are put upon it, as well as upon the passivity of the infant, that this passage has no special force; but if grace is allowed to counteract evil agencies in the earlier periods of infancy, then the passage has peculiar significance. It is firmly believed that grace can and does counteract these evil agencies, that it has access to the infant's passive soul, and in its own way meets the enemy upon his own ground and vanquishes him.

It is claimed that the Holy Spirit can renew the soul of the infant without the use of means, and this is warranted by the fact that the infant has never been an actual transgressor; therefore it need not hear the Word or believe or repent or be converted. This belief is also warranted by the fact that the infant has receptivity without the power to accept or reject, and because this receptivity must be more available for grace than for sins, since grace much more abounds. This view is also assumed because the Savior Himself has said: "Of such is the kingdom of heaven." It will not do, however, to rest here; but with no other facts before us, it is firmly believed that the Holy Spirit without baptism has an avenue to such souls by which He enters and antagonizes evil, prevents its progress, rescues the infant from its grasp, and bestows saving grace upon it. Of His own self He finds an open door, where, in spite of depravity or heredity or evil of any kind, He may enter and garnish the infant soul for His own abode. And there he continues to dwell throughout life, or until, after the dawn of consciousness, He is forced by the voluntary sinfulness of such soul to retire, if not forever, at least for a season.

But a belief however plausible, even tho based upon conclusions reached or words uttered by the Savior, may not be satisfactory to many minds in a matter so vital to the in-

fant as salvation. Besides, many will seek to evade the application made of the Savior's words respecting infants. We must not rest here, therefore, but advance further, in the sure hope of finding positive proof for the belief that infants are in such passive state that they can be reached by saving grace without the use of baptism or a glimpse after their death of the Savior.

CHAPTER XXI

DOES THE INFANT POSSESS THE REQUISITE STATE WHICH
ENABLES THE HOLY SPIRIT TO REGENERATE IT?—ITS
FEEBLENESS NO BARRIER—ACTIVITY NOT NECESSARY
ON ITS PART—ACTIVE SUBMISSION UNNECESSARY FOR
THE INFANT—CONSCIOUSNESS UNNECESSARY FOR THE
INFANT

IF it can be shown that all infants possess the proper passivity of soul to welcome the Holy Spirit, then all controversy is at an end. They can be regenerated without baptism.

It is confidently believed that they do possess this passivity, and that the possession is capable of proof. The facts already proven warrant this assumption. Having established these facts, the end of our contention is in sight. Henceforth every energy necessary shall be put forth to attain it.

There must be a like condition of passivity for infants and adults, a common point of contact with the Holy Spirit, before this regeneration can take place. It must be the same precisely for one as for the other. We can not conceive of two or more kinds of passivity, either of which will be acceptable to the Holy Spirit and equally adapted to its regenerating work. No, this can not be; each soul must be met upon the same common ground, whether its faculties be in an embryonic or fully developed state. If it can be proven that the infant can present to the Holy

Spirit the same passivity that is required of the adult, then it must follow that it, too, may be regenerated. If it can also be shown that the infant attains to this required condition without the aid of the means of grace, then the doctrine that baptism is essential to its salvation is erroneous, since it is not reasonable that the Holy Spirit would reject such a one simply because it is not baptized. It will also set aside the view of Antipedobaptists, that the infant must die and then, upon obtaining its first view of Christ in the future world, that it is instantly qualified for heaven. Also election, which is presumed to antedate everything, even the foundations of the world as it is from "all eternity," will be compelled to assume an unusually arbitrary phase, if all infants can present a common condition for the Holy Spirit's admittance. Yet by the most arbitrary of all decrees the Holy Spirit is forbidden to enter and renew the souls of a large proportion of infants because these are not of the elect.

Again, if we can find that the infant soul is already in the same receptive, passive state as the adult just before regeneration, that will also set aside the view of the Roman Church that the Holy Spirit is entirely dependent upon the Church and its ordinances.

If this proper state can be found in infants we will have reached a summit from which we can look out upon a magnificent expanse of possibility for them. The Church would soon take advantage of such belief, and regard the infant soul as already saved; and with this as a starting-point, she could most hopefully spend her energies in training the child for Christ, rather than suffer it to wait under the delusion that it is not old enough to follow Him. Whether this can be shown or not remains to be seen; the attempt at least will be made.

Now while it is true that there is a great difference be-

tween the adult and the infant (the difference between maturity on the one hand and adolescence on the other), and the infant may on this account seem to be at a great disadvantage, yet, in fact, this is not the case. The infant rather has a superior advantage in that its natural powers have never been abused by actual sin. This more than counterbalances the seeming advantages of maturity. Let it be understood that this feebleness does not deaden any of the qualities of the soul. At its worst it is but negative—a feebleness that is rather strength in the germ state, progressive, developing—not a feebleness of decay caused by age or abuse. The germ in the grain, the acorn, and the egg contains all the essential qualities and possibilities of life. Tho that life is in a very feeble, even dormant state, yet it is amply sufficient for a beginning. So the feebleness of the infant is full of hope. The germs of spiritual life are all present. Senility in the sinner presents an almost hopeless feebleness of soul; but, on the other hand, senility in the Christian does not injure the life of the spirit; it only modifies it. So feebleness in the infant, as in the senile Christian, neither prevents nor injures spiritual life. Therefore feebleness in our spiritual faculties is no barrier in itself, except it be the feebleness of age and abuse combined. It is true that the infant can not display the fruits of the Holy Spirit as the adult can, but the life of the Spirit may be present nevertheless. This was true of those infants which were declared to be “of the kingdom of heaven,” yet they did not prove it by works. John the Baptist did not for years after he was born show the effect of the Spirit upon his life, but the work was begun before he was born notwithstanding. Hence the feebleness incident to infancy will not in itself prove a barrier to the work of regeneration, and we need not be discouraged on its account.

So far, then, as feebleness is concerned, the necessary condition for the Holy Spirit's work may be presented by it. It seems highly probable that the only reason the adult requires developed faculties at regeneration is that he has wilfully sinned through them, and now he must repent and believe by them. For these reasons he must have them. Feebleness in the infant, it is assumed, is no barrier to the Holy Spirit.

But in order to make the most thorough investigation possible, and to cover the ground most satisfactorily, let us see if there are any conditions or states of soul required by regeneration which the feebleness of the infant makes it impossible for it to possess.

First, the infant can not be active; but we have already seen that activity, so far as it concerns regeneration, is not required. If it were necessary, even in one particular, in thought, will, or belief, this attempt would be useless, since activity in the infant is impossible; its faculties are embryonic simply; they are there as future possibilities, but in no true sense can they be active; their time for activity has not yet arrived. But clearly activity of no kind and in no sense is necessary for the infant's regeneration; since the initial steps—penitence and conversion which make activity necessary—are not essential for infants, and as the Holy Spirit alone regenerates, no activity can be necessary on their part to secure that end. Even the adult is not active. It is a divine, spiritual life that is received; there is nothing of the human connected with it; therefore the human subject has no share in bestowing it. If the individual was active in any sense in his own regeneration, then he would assist the Spirit and become in part his own regenerator. This is contrary not only to reason, but to Scripture also. Let the following passages suffice: "A new heart will I [God] give unto you" (Ezek. xxxvi: 26).

"So is every one that is born of the Spirit" (John iii: 8).
 "It is the Spirit that quickeneth" (John vi: 63). The Spirit alone.

"Believe on the Lord Jesus Christ and thou shalt be saved" (Acts xvi: 31). Saved not by belief, but by the Holy Ghost because we believe.

"You hath he quickened who were dead in trespasses and sins" (Ephes. ii: 1). "He," the Holy Spirit without our assistance.

"According to his mercy hath he saved us by the washing of regeneration and the renewing of the Holy Ghost" (Titus iii: 1).

"His divine power hath given unto us all things that pertain to life and godliness" (2 Peter i: 3).

It is needless to multiply passages, as the divine Word is perfectly consistent throughout. The Holy Spirit is the sole agent in this renewing work. Everywhere the Scriptures repudiate the idea that the soul is active in its own regeneration; either in cooperation with the Holy Spirit or by itself alone.

To this latter sentence exception may be taken, since the Prophet Ezekiel says (xviii: 31): "*Make unto you a new heart and a new spirit.*" "This," says a commentator, "shows not what man *can* do, but what he ought to do, what God requires of us. God alone can make us a new heart." *

This passage is a good illustration of that form of expression which is so common in our own English language whereby the passive subject is made the active agent. For instance, in such as the following phrases: "Cook the meal," "Heat the water," "Bake the bread." Man can do neither, the fire is the active agent and does the work; we are passive; we are active only in the prepara-

* Jamieson, Faussett, and Brown.

tion for it in each case. We also say: "Raise a crop." "A Paul can only plant, and an Apollos water"; but after that they must become passive, while God "gives the increase." "Play a tune." Impossible; we can touch the keys, that is all; the vibrations of the instrument must give forth the notes. "Fill the pitcher." We can not; the water must do that. "Sprout the seed." "Dam the water," and very many other sentences might be employed to illustrate the kind of expression here used by the prophet. He makes man the active agent in making himself a new spirit, when He simply means that the individual must repent of his sins and turn to God, that He may make him a new heart. This is proven to be the true interpretation of that passage from the fact that Ezekiel in other chapters uses the correct language. For instance (xi:10), he says: "Thus saith the Lord God, . . . I will give them one heart, and I will put a new spirit within you; and I will take the stony heart out of their flesh, and will give them an heart of flesh." Also in xxxvi:26: "A new heart also will I give you, and a new spirit will I put within you; and I will take away the stony heart out of your flesh, and I will give you a heart of flesh, and I will put my Spirit within you." These illustrations and quotations will set at rest any doubt occasioned by the passage referred to. We are therefore only active in supplying necessary conditions; after this we become passive until the work is consummated by the Holy Spirit. In the case of the adult, he is active in his cooperation with the Spirit in conversion and in believing "unto righteousness"; but with these attained, his activity is at an end; he does not participate in the work of regeneration itself. Therefore the subject is not active, but acted upon; all his activity ceases at the very threshold of regenerated life. Into this holy of holies no human soul can enter actively except with profane tread.

The High Priest of spiritual life has reserved this exclusively for Himself.

It is now clear that activity on the part of the helpless infant is not necessary in its regeneration, since it is not required of the adult.

Submission is another state which, if necessary, is not possible for the infant, but clearly it is not necessary except for adults; it is simply made necessary by the previous life of the subject, a life which has been rebellious, and which, in order to be regenerated, must first submit. Submission, however, is only one phase of activity which, as has been shown, is not necessary for the infant. More than that, submission to a being you have never wilfully resisted and before you are old enough to resist Him is not necessary. Besides, the infant is already so passive that it receives.

Consciousness is another state of soul that is not required of the infant in order that it may be quickened by the Spirit. It, like submission, is simply necessary in order to enable other qualities of the soul to become active and thereby to prepare it for regeneration; that is all. It is extremely doubtful whether the adult is ever conscious of the time or place of his own regeneration; it is clear that he need not be. Extravagant and erroneous views respecting this event have led to wrong methods of training the young, it being assumed that none are regenerated unless the time and place of that important event are known. The natural conclusion is that the child must be looked upon as needing regeneration later in life, rather than considered as one whom God had already quickened; hence the necessity for delay in its case.

This is a great mistake; consciousness need not first dawn upon the soul before the Spirit may quicken it. Assuming this much, let us proceed with the proof.

"Marvel not," said Jesus to Nicodemus, "that I said unto you, Ye must be born again. The wind bloweth where it listeth, and thou hearest the sound thereof, but canst not tell whence it cometh, or whither it goeth; *so is every one that is born of the Spirit.*"

It was the amazement of Nicodemus at the thought of being born again that led to his asking the question, "How can a man be born when he is old?" and that induced Jesus to make His reply. Nicodemus thought it must be a repetition of the birth from the womb; hence his question, "Can he enter the second time into his mother's womb and be born?"

Jesus corrects this by informing him that it is the birth of the soul that is meant; the Spirit in the act of regenerating a soul comes and goes like the wind; "you can not tell whence it cometh, or whither it goeth." The wind defies our knowledge; its origin, destination, and even its presence can not be known except by its effects, and when you come to know the effects, its work is already done and it is gone. So when we come to realize what the Holy Spirit has done in the soul, the work of regeneration has already been accomplished. We were not aware of its being done at the time, and could not know of it, except by its results. Effects follow causes, they are not simultaneous with them. This is particularly true of spiritual cause and effect; the ability to perceive the cause is impossible, and for reasons to be given. It is a fact that most of those who are now active Christians do not profess to know the time or place of their regeneration. They were unconscious of its commencement: some, in fact, did not become cognizant of it for years after. This is true of the great majority. This being the case, it is certainly not necessary that any should be cognizant of it. Why should the small minority know of it while the large majority need

not? Why should it be known by any, if not by all? They all know of the result; so if all must know of the result, why should not all know also the time and place, if that were necessary? It is easy to know the one, we can not know the others. If the adult can not be conscious of anything but the results, it is clear that the infant can not be conscious of the quickening of its soul, and need not be.

Our physical nature through its five senses presents facts connected with itself which are much more easily discerned by us than the spiritual fact of regeneration. These five senses convey to us a knowledge of the objects with which we come in contact and which affect us more powerfully than the spiritual faculties can. Yet even the five senses are shrouded in unconsciousness through all the earlier stages of being, through conception, gestation, and birth, and even for months thereafter. If there can be physical life through all these incipient stages, and if that life can develop from the embryonic to the organic state, and out of utter insensibility and unconsciousness to full consciousness, why should it be thought strange if the far more delicate and impalpable life of the Spirit should enter the soul and possess it, while the subject is yet in a state of unconsciousness? Regarding this matter an author of great penetration and distinction has this to say:

“It is peculiar to all God’s creative agencies that the creature which is thereby brought into existence, or in which this or that is brought into existence, has no consciousness of what is occurring. When Adam, in consequence of the divine inbreathing, came to the consciousness of himself, his creation was then already perfected; and when God would create the woman out of him, He caused a deep sleep first to fall upon him. It is still just in the same way that man comes into existence. In respect of

the husband and wife, who are the instruments of propagating divine power, the moment of conception is associated with an actual veiling of the consciousness; and the consciousness of the spirit of the embryo is germinally restrained, and does not wake until, glimmering as a feeling of self, it finds itself born into the light of the world as a complete man. The creature, in coming into existence, is related to God the Creator as the clay to the potter (Isa. xxix:16, xlv. 9, lxiv:7; Jer. xviii:6; Eccl. xxxvi:13). Compare also Rom. ix:20, where the apostle proceeds thereupon to prove the absolute oneness of God, and of His world-plan as anticipating all consciousness and all individual agency of man. . . . Even to assume only the possibility of a conscious cooperation of the creature would be absurd. *The like is the case also with the birth from above.* Even the first operation of grace which overpowers us, while we allow ourselves to be overpowered, occurs in us as in the condition of sleep and of death. . . . The events named and promised by the Word all occur in us in the depth of unconsciousness."*

The same profound author tells us that "the operation of the Spirit of regeneration is therefore (1) a free one, withdrawn from the power of human volition, of human special agency; (2) a mysterious one, lying beyond human consciousness, and only to be recognized by its effects. The regenerated person recognizes himself as a new man, with a fundamentally changed tendency in all his powers, released by the sprinkling with Christ's blood from his previously evil conscience."†

Here this author boldly affirms that the operation of the Spirit of regeneration lies beyond the consciousness, and is only recognized by its effects or experiences. "He

* Delitzsch, "Biblical Psychology," p. 403.

† *Idem*, p. 402.

hears the voice of the Spirit, like the rush of the wind, experiencing in himself the testimony of the Spirit of adoption: the cry of Abba Father, the discipline of the Holy Spirit manifesting itself in many ways, in instruction, warning, and reproof; he is enlightened once for all; he tastes the heavenly gift of forgiveness of sins; he knows himself in the actual possession of the Holy Ghost. . . . But all these things are only the results of that which has transpired in him; the divine fact itself is and remains for him, in an unattainable depth placed below his consciousness. . . . He is conscious to himself of that which is effected, but only as the result of a spiritual work that has transpired in the region of his unconsciousness.”*

Our author affirms that this unconsciousness is the condition of the adult at the time of his regeneration. That being the case, we need not expect that the infant would be placed beyond the regenerating power of the Holy Spirit, because it could not be conscious at the moment of regeneration. We would not expect the infant to be conscious if the adult can not be.

But it may be objected that the adult is conscious before and up to the moment of his renewal; and his consciousness performs a necessary part in preparing the soul for its regeneration; therefore we must expect that this same consciousness must be present, and assist in preparing the infant for the same work. This objection will not be raised by a Pedobaptist. All such do not believe that the infant need be conscious in order to be blessed in baptism.

But this will not meet the objection raised by those who reject Pedobaptism. They insist that the infant can not be quickened by the Spirit, because it is not conscious and can not hear the Word or believe, and the only way to

*“Biblical Psychology,” p. 402.

reach the infant soul is after it dies; while living it is a spiritual imbecile.

These objectors are referred again to the fact that the infant stands in a very different relation to the Holy Spirit from that of the adult sinner; its consciousness need not become active in order that the soul be prepared for the Spirit's work. Consciousness, which is one of the necessary conditions of that necessary activity in the adult, will therefore not be necessary in the infant.

We take the liberty to quote from another author whose name should add weight to his opinion:

"Shall we parents infuse into the souls of our children through education, and *even in their conception*, spiritual seed, which springs up, and shall not He through whom and for whom they were born? Can it be that, before the consciousness of the personal ego, the child is not susceptible of any operation of the Holy Spirit?"*

The Savior's language, "Whosoever shall not receive the kingdom of heaven as a little child, he shall not enter therein," implies that all little children do receive it; not actively, it is true, but neither does the adult.

The little child is prepared to receive the kingdom of heaven without any previous preparation on its part. Consciousness is therefore not necessary to prepare the infant for regeneration.

We might refer the reader again to the oft-quoted words from Matt. xviii:3: "Except ye be converted, and become as little children, ye shall not enter into the kingdom of heaven."

The consciousness required to assist the adult through his repentance and conversion is wholly unnecessary for the infant, as it is already prepared for the kingdom of heaven.

* Stier, "Words of Jesus," vol. iii., p. 808.

If consciousness is not necessary to prepare the infant for regeneration, neither is it necessary for it while being regenerated; since that takes place in the adult and infant; as Delitzsch says, "back of the region of consciousness."

It is sufficient for the infant that it have the conscious quality in embryo; this it has in common with all the other mental and spiritual faculties.

The words of the Savior would seem to warrant more than is claimed. He says: "Whosoever shall not receive the kingdom of heaven as a little child, he shall not enter therein." These words imply that there is a genuine receiving of the kingdom of heaven by these little ones; yet in the very nature of the case it can not be an active, conscious acceptance; they receive without accepting—in other words, they have the capacity to receive before they can either accept or reject. In that sense they receive the kingdom of heaven.

The same is true of that other passage (Matt. xviii:6), "But whoso shall offend one of these little ones which *believe in me*," etc. Or the fourth verse, "Whosoever, therefore, shall humble himself as this little child," etc. The "offend," "believe," and "humble," are not used in the active, conscious sense, as when applied to adults. They serve to show, however, that there is the capacity for these states of soul, and that the Holy Spirit can and does without coercion avail itself of them, tho the infant be not yet conscious. At least the Savior does not see fit to make any distinction between infants and adults in the matter of consciousness.

But before building too much upon these passages let us first determine something more concerning the age of these little ones, which "received," "believed," and "humbled" themselves. Were they old enough to understand or believe? Could they "come unto" Christ as the adult is

commanded to do? Were they old enough actively to "believe first and to receive the kingdom of God," just as the adult receives it?

One fact is made clear, so far as the two Greek words *paidion* and *brepheos* are concerned, and which in the plural are translated "little ones," "little children," "infants." It is this: both are used to mean either very young infants or little children. For instance, Luke, recording the circumcision of John the Baptist, says: "And on the eighth day they came to circumcise the child [*paidion*]." Also in the sixty-sixth verse of the same chapter, in referring to the wonderful character of John, the people said: "What manner of child [*paidion*] shall this be?" Also in the seventy-sixth verse: "And thou, child [*paidion*], shalt be called the prophet of the highest." In each of these instances *paidion* refers to a very young infant only eight days old.

In the eighteenth chapter, sixteenth verse, Luke, in recording the fact that they brought infants to Jesus, says: "But Jesus called them unto him, and said, Suffer little children [*paidia*] to come unto me." Now we find the most scholarly of the writers of the Gospels using the same word, as applicable to an infant only eight days old, and to others who were in all probability older; for it is likely that the children who were old enough to be brought to Jesus were over that age. Yet among those who were older it is morally certain that there were some at least, if not all, that were too young to understand or actively believe; they were all "*paidia*," and their ages may have ranged from the young infant to the child that could walk.

A fact worthy of notice is, that Luke in the fifteenth verse of this eighteenth chapter calls these little ones "*brephe*" (infants), and in the next verse he calls them "*paidia*." In the first instance *brephe* is translated "in

fants," and in the latter *paidia*, "little children." So then it is clear that infants were also brought, or the two words would not be used in the same connection.

Matthew in recording the same fact (xix:13), and Mark also (x:15), uses the plural of *paidion*, the word that Luke employs in recording the circumcision of John the Baptist. Yet John was but eight days old when circumcised. Such were brought to Jesus, and of these He said, "Suffer them to come." These could "receive the kingdom of God." They possessed the spiritual capacity to receive, and were in a state to welcome the Savior's blessing, and not to bring them to Him was to "forbid them."

It is also worthy of mention that the Savior's command to suffer little children to come unto Him was addressed to *all* little children. The term "little children" is a general one, and therefore includes infants. The phrases used by our Savior, "Whosoever shall *not receive the kingdom of God as a little child*," and "Suffer little children *to come unto me and forbid them not*," are as applicable to children of the tenderest age as to those older. The Savior made no exceptions.

In what sense could these tender infants be said to "come unto" Christ, or to "receive the kingdom of God"? Certainly not in a conscious sense, tho the language of the Savior would imply as much, for the *coming* and *receiving* are in the present tense, and are active in signification. He does not say, "Suffer these to come unto me if they are old enough," but "Suffer them to come just as they are." He even emphasizes the invitation by telling them that, "Whosoever shall not receive the kingdom of God as a little child, he shall not enter therein."

Yet we know that infants could not consciously or actively "come" or "receive." How then do you explain the difficulty? It is all made plain when we understand that this

receiving state of soul is never an active or a conscious one, not even in the adult; the Holy Spirit alone is active; the subject is passive; therefore, while the casual reader would infer that the Scriptures require conscious activity on the part of the subject at the time it receives the kingdom of God, yet the inference is not correct. So far then the infant is not from want of conscious activity unable to receive the kingdom of God. This will be made to appear yet more clearly. Notwithstanding the fact that the infant is not active, it nevertheless really receives the kingdom of God.

The truth is, as has before been explained, and as Delitzsch affirms, that consciousness plays no part whatever, even in the adult's case, in the act of regeneration, since the act occurs back of the consciousness, and therefore independent of it; so that whatever part this consciousness plays in bringing the adult into the proper state for regeneration, it can perform none whatever in the regenerating act. The ability to "believe," to "come," and to "receive," which the Savior attributes to these infants is only embryonic, yet that is sufficient for all practical purposes; their inactivity and unconsciousness do not prevent the operation of the Holy Spirit upon them.

Before dismissing the subject of the Savior's conduct toward little children and His teaching concerning them, it is of the utmost importance that we carefully consider the incident recorded in Matt. xviii:1 and in Mark ix:36.

The Savior, in order that He might teach His disciples a lesson concerning humility, called a little child unto Him, and set him in the midst of them, and said: "Verily I say unto you, except ye be converted and become as little children, ye shall not enter into the kingdom of heaven," etc.

We are not here concerned about the lesson of humility the Savior designed to teach His disciples through this lit-

tle child, but about the age of the child and what He said of children in general.

He called the child to Him, and "set him in the midst of them." He was old enough to walk, therefore; but Mark adds, "and when he had taken him in his arms." While, therefore, the child could walk, he was yet not too large to be taken up and held in the arms. The word *paidion* is used in the singular and plural in each of the accounts given of this incident. Matthew, Mark, and Luke use it. We know, however, that in the case of this "little child" it was old enough to walk, but Matthew records it as if this little one was only one of a general class, including all children, regardless of age, for immediately after setting him in their midst by first taking him in His arms, the Savior adds: "Verily I say unto you except ye be converted and *become as little children* ye shall not enter into the kingdom of heaven."

So, then, the age of this particular child that Jesus took in His arms is after all nothing, as it is only a representative of all "*paidia*," of children in general. Of these it is said in substance, that they are in a state which the adult sinner can reach only by conversion. Will not the words of the Savior bear us out in this? He said to the adults about Him: "Except ye be converted, and become as little children," etc.

Now while some might be disposed to cavil and say that the particular child that Jesus took in His arms was old enough to be responsible, and therefore by its acceptance of the Savior had become a Christian, yet this caviling is silenced by the fact that the Savior says of children in general that they are "in the kingdom of heaven."

But laying all this aside, there is another very conclusive fact connected with this incident; it is this, the Savior did not first have to prepare this particular child before

He could use him as an example of humility. He was already prepared. Moreover, He seems to have called him to Him as if any other child there would have answered as well. Now, since He did not have to prepare him first, since He did not first have to put His hands upon him and bless him, or in some other way prepare him to become such an example, the conclusion must be this, the child was from its infancy in a state the sinner can attain to only by first becoming converted, namely, in the kingdom of God.

There can be no doubt the Savior intended to bless those children upon whom He placed His hands. By the same means He had healed some. His words, "Suffer little children, and forbid them not to come unto me, for of such is the kingdom of heaven," prove as much. The laying on of hands was no idle ceremony; that it had some spiritual significance is not denied. We must keep in mind the fact that these words are addressed to infants as a class, and that these children are of the kingdom of heaven whether the Savior puts His hand upon them or not. Those brought to Him were saved before they were brought. The blessing He gave them—for such it was—could not have been the first they had received; for they were of the kingdom of God before they were brought.

Now taking these two instances, wherein the Savior expressed Himself freely respecting the spiritual state of infants, we are forced to conclude that all have had provision made for their salvation. Also, that they are in such a condition by nature that the Holy Spirit can enter their souls and impart its blessed life to them. Their unconsciousness is therefore no barrier to saving grace, since they have spiritual receptivity before they can accept or reject.

CHAPTER XXII

THE PASSIVE STATE NECESSARY

LET us now return to the inquiry made in a previous chapter, and ask :

First, What is that state at which regeneration uniformly takes place in the adult ? Whatever it may be, the infant must also possess it, or it can not be quickened by the Holy Spirit. As previously stated, we can not conceive of two or more distinct states of soul, either of which is acceptable to the regenerating agent. There can be but one, and for this we have been searching all this while. If found it must stand all the tests. It must be Scriptural, and be possible for infant as well as adult. This common requirement is the passive state. There can be no other. In this passive state the infant must be born ; there are no ways or means revealed to lead the infant into it, and there need not be. It is a birthright. The adult sinner, having lost it, must reach it again by the steps prescribed by Scripture. None of these steps can do more than prepare the soul for passivity. Repentance and conversion effect this passivity ; at this point their work ceases. They bear no part in the regenerating act itself. " With the heart man believeth *unto* righteousness," not *into* it. This belief takes the pitcher to the wells of salvation, but it does not fill it ; the water of life does that. So belief, repentance, and conversion take the dead soul of the adult to the fountain of life, but they do not bestow that life ; the Holy Spirit does that. All human effort ceases entirely at the

threshold of regeneration. The soul there enters the state the Spirit seeks, the passive one; it has no sooner reached it than it is saved, always saved.

This passive state is not only the true one for the beginning of spiritual life, but for natural life also. Life in its various forms, animal and vegetable, begins at a point similar to this, and in all essential features identical with it. In the case of the acorn this point is the entrance into the warm soil. Of the egg under the brooding bird, neither is active, but acted upon; the life that comes to them is due to no activity or cooperation on their part, but is entirely due to agencies that are separate from and independent of them. They are not active, but acted upon.

The Savior intends to teach the same truth respecting His spiritual kingdom in that parable of the leaven: "The kingdom of heaven is like unto leaven which a woman took and hid in three measures of meal, until the whole was leavened." The meal is entirely passive, while the leaven alone is active. It continues this activity while the meal continues its passivity from the beginning until the completion of the work. So the Holy Spirit, as the agent of the kingdom of heaven, seeks this same passive condition in the soul, and finding it always enters. It is necessary for the sinner who was when an infant in a saved state, but has lost it by actual sin, to reach this state again before he can be renewed. To it all his powers must come: penitence, belief, and conversion; secure this for him without fail, and with it the door of the passive soul opens wide to welcome the ever-present and waiting Spirit. It was to this state that penitence, belief, and conversion brought the apostle while on his way to Damascus, "breathing out threatening and slaughter against the disciples of the Lord." The high priest had given him letters to the synagogues of

that city, "that if he found any of this way, whether they were men or women, he might bring them bound unto Jerusalem." But before he reached his destination he heard a strange voice, "Saul, Saul, why persecutest thou me?" Paul's regeneration was the result. It was the passive condition of Saul's soul that made this possible; he had contended with Stephen in the synagogues in Jerusalem, and was one who "was not able to withstand the wisdom and the spirit by which he [Stephen] spoke." He also was at Stephen's trial and heard that remarkable speech, which Paul afterward imitated in his own defense before Agrippa and Festus. He also there "saw Stephen's face shine, as if it had been the face of an angel." Saul stood near when he was stoned, "and was consenting unto his death." The false witnesses laid down their clothes at his feet, while they stoned Stephen. He heard him exclaim: "Behold I see the heavens opened and the Son of Man standing on the right hand of God." He also heard his dying prayer, "Lord, lay not this sin to their charge." All this was too much for a sensitive nature like Saul. The wisdom and spirit of Stephen's words and his triumphant death were as arrows that fastened themselves in a sure place in his heart. After all this he was under deep conviction, even when he made havoc of the Church, and committed men and women to prison, and went to the high priest to obtain those letters to the synagogues of Damascus. He was under conviction while he was "breathing out threatening and slaughter" against the Christians there. He vainly endeavored in this way to free his soul from this tormentor. It was of no avail; every step he took only drove the arrow deeper, and the wonderful voice he heard, and the light from heaven that shone about him, were all due to the fact that the desperate persecutor had reached his limit; conviction had ended in penitence at last. The

voice from heaven spake and the passive Saul asked, "Lord, what wilt thou have me to do?"

This remarkable illustration has been chosen because it is the only recorded one that might seem to be an exception to the general rule.

The invariable process in the case of sinners is as follows: Rebellion has alienated their hearts; the truth and the Holy Spirit go in search of them; conviction, penitence, and conversion bring them into a passive condition, or as "little children"; and they are, as a result, regenerated by the Holy Spirit alone. As elsewhere explained, the subject's activity can not carry the soul beyond the passive state into the spiritual one; that is impossible. The moment passivity begins, the Holy Spirit takes possession. The sole aim and end of the subject's activity is to bring the soul into the passive state; it can do no more.

Of this the ocean itself is the grandest earthly type. The rain from the clouds, the streams from all the fountains and the far-away hills, with the floods from the valleys, all empty themselves into larger channels, until they concentrate their activity in majestic rivers which finally pour their swollen contents into the great passive ocean. Activity then ceases. Then the accumulated waters passively compose the mighty deep. They move, but not by their own energy. The tidal energy and the storm king undulate and toss them. The Gulf Stream sweeps through them, but they in contempt of its energy slumber beside it, and patiently suffer evaporation into the clouds. So the adult soul that is submissive to divine gravity is driven into proper activity, and sooner or later reaches the passive state, whence divine energy exalts it into a higher, heavenly, spiritual life.

The truth is, the soul can not become susceptible of either

good or evil except it first become passive. The evil spirit is as dependent upon the passivity that results from unbelief as the Holy Spirit is upon that from penitence and belief. Sin in the adult would have no evil effect whatever upon the sinner's heart except unbelief had first made him its passive, willing subject. It is true, therefore, that neither good nor evil have any coercive power in themselves, but finding this passive condition ready for either, each enters respectively a welcome guest. It is around this passivity that good and evil war incessantly for the mastery. Belief on the one hand and unbelief on the other are the commanders-in-chief of their contending forces. It is therefore the passive state of soul which the Holy Spirit seeks before it can regenerate it—this, nothing more, nothing less. It does not require activity or consciousness, but absolute passivity. To corroborate this it will be in order to quote from recognized authorities:

“The ‘Form of Concord’ says that ‘Dr. Luther has written that the will of man in his conversion remains purely passive, that it does nothing at all, but merely allows that which God works in him.’ ”*

“The authors of the ‘Form of Concord’ then say that he [Luther] ‘wishes to imply that man of himself, or by his own natural powers, is unable to effect anything, or to assist in his conversion, and that this conversion is not only in part, but wholly and entirely an operation, a gift, and a work of the Holy Ghost, who by His own power and might works and accomplishes it; . . . that is, in which the person neither does nor effects anything, but merely permits it to be done; not as a statue, out of hewn stone, nor as a seal imprinted in wax, which has neither knowledge nor

*“Book of Concord,” p. 473. The term “conversion” here is used in the sense of regeneration by the translator.

feeling nor will with respect to the operation, but in the manner as has already been defined.' " *

A writer of recent date compares the state of the soul at its regeneration to the state of the creature at its birth, and says they are identical, so far as passivity is concerned. These are his words: "The creature which God establishes in actual existence is therein absolutely passive. Even to assume only the possibility of a conscious cooperation of the creature is absurd. The like is the case also with the birth from above. Even the first operation of grace which overpowers us, while we allow ourselves to be overpowered, occurs in us as in the condition of sleep and of death (Ephes. v: 14)." †

This is the most absolute passivity.

Dr. J. H. Ebrard, of Erlangen, in writing of the state of the soul in the act of regeneration, says: "In this latter process [regeneration] the soul is simply passive. God is the only agent." ‡

Another voluminous and standard author says: "The more passively in the true sense man comes and takes, the better; and at the end, as at the beginning, he actually enters only by this pure passivity into the kingdom of heaven." §

This fact that the soul is in a passive condition in the act of its regeneration, the Scriptures fully attest. "It is the Spirit that quickeneth" (John vi: 23). "You hath he quickened who were dead in trespasses and sins." "But God, . . . even when we were dead in sins, hath quickened us together with Christ" (Ephes. ii: 4, 5). The passages in the Old and New Testaments are so numerous that

* *Idem*, p. 541.

† Delitzsch, "Biblical Psychology," p. 403.

‡ Per Dr. Hodge, "Systematic Theology," vol. iii., p. 23.

§ Stier, "Words of the Lord Jesus," vol. i., p. 357.

it is needless to quote them. If, therefore, God is the only active agent in the work of regeneration, then man must of necessity be in a passive condition; for there is no other conceivable state wherein he could be regenerated. At least this has been established: that the infant need not rise above a passive state in order to be regenerated—in other words, it need not be active, since the adult himself is not active.

We could safely rest this part of the proof here, but shall undertake to go a step beyond, and prove that all the after-growth in grace is made in the same manner. This same passivity is preserved throughout all the progress made in regenerated life.

The injunction of the apostle is: "Work out your own salvation with fear and trembling, for it is God who worketh in you, to will and to do, of his own good pleasure."

By actively working out our own salvation we present at each step in our religious life a passive state of soul, tho on a higher plane than each preceding one.

As faith and activity grow, the soul becomes more passive, and as a consequence the Spirit's work increases in proportion. It is for us to present the best state of passivity in order that He may most effectually work in us "to will and to do." It is as if the soul were a vessel which grew in capacity; as such it is taken to the wells of salvation that their waters may fill and refill it.

In working out his "own salvation with fear and trembling" the Christian is only enlarging his capacity. This is simply increasing one's passivity. The Scriptures call this attitude of the soul as one that *lets*. "Let your light so shine before men that others seeing your good works," etc. "Let the peace of God rule in your hearts." "Let the Word of Christ dwell in you richly in all wisdom." This passivity is simply a *letting* attitude of soul. The

ability to let is a growing one; as it grows we grow in grace. It is therefore our duty passively to let our lights shine. We can not actively make them shine; the Holy Spirit must do that. We can not actively make "the peace of God rule in our hearts," but passively we can let it. So we can let the Word dwell in our hearts, but we should let it dwell as richly as possible. We then are active in "working out" our "salvation in fear and trembling," but are passive in letting God work in us to will and to do of His own "good pleasure." The Holy Spirit, therefore, meets the subject of grace before, and even after, regeneration at the threshold of passivity; and then without our aid works in us to will and to do of His own good pleasure.

The work of renewing and sanctifying the soul is monergistic. It is necessary for the soul to become and to remain passive from first to last. Then it is in the state required that it may become and continue a growing subject of grace. If, therefore, the infant can be passive like the adult, then there is no reason why it should not also become a subject of saving grace without baptism, as the adult can.

The determining factor is passivity, and not baptism. If, therefore, the passivity of the infant is the same in kind as in the adult, we have the key to this whole question. The infant also receives "the kingdom of God" (Mark x:15).

It has already been proven that the infant is passive, and that this passivity is such that it receives before it can accept or reject, even before it is born. The captious critic, however, may claim that this is not a passivity like the adult's when he repents and is converted. Let us see. The Savior, addressing adults, said: "Except ye be converted, and become as little children, ye shall in no wise enter into the kingdom of heaven." As shown, little children are completely passive, and passivity is the essential

factor in regeneration. Adults must, therefore, to enter the kingdom of heaven, become passive; in doing so, they become as little children. Hence their passivity is the same as that of children. If this passivity is sufficient for the regeneration of the adult, it is also sufficient for the infant. Passivity being the essential factor in regeneration, there is no need of baptism to plant "the germ of faith," or "to make regeneration possible later on," or "to break up the absoluteness of the natural bondage," or "to bring an instant possibility of salvation." No, it possesses, before baptism is possible, the passivity essential for the Spirit's work. This is the secure refuge of infants; they have ever possessed it. Because of this the Savior could say of them, "of such is the kingdom of heaven," and "whosoever shall not receive the kingdom of God as a little child, he shall not enter therein" (Mark x:15).

The child does not actively receive the kingdom of heaven, neither does the adult. Both are passive; not active, but acted upon. Both receive regeneration on the same condition.

Before leaving this key to infant salvation it will not be amiss to look at this passivity in the infant from another standpoint—the one at which the Antipedobaptist stumbles. This is the helplessness or spiritual imbecility of the infant. "How can it be saved when it can not believe?" he asks. Tho it has been explained, it will be in order at this particular place to reiterate and amplify what has been written.

What is the real state of this supposed helplessness of the infant? It is a complete personality; its spiritual, mental, and physical powers are all present. It is true that these powers are as yet in an embryonic state, but they are all there, even from conception, as the root, branches, and trunk are all mysteriously present in the germ of the

seed. They are all there possessed of receptivity and capable of complete development without having any new faculty added to them. Even this rudimentary state is a fully endowed one, tho of extreme feebleness.

We must bear in mind that the state of the infant soul is not the opposite of belief or one of unbelief; that state is not possible until it is old enough to be responsible. Neither is the state of the infant soul the opposite of consciousness; the germs of belief and consciousness are both present and capable of meeting the demands of each advancing step of development in spiritual life. As the germs of the seeds and the adolescent organs of the human body make possible each progressive and unfolding step of their growth through the vital energy they possess, so the infant soul finds in this embryonic belief and consciousness all the vital energy necessary for its own after-development and for any spiritual life that may thereafter be necessary for it.

It is true, then, in view of the foregoing, that there is no difference between the passivity of the infant and that of the adult after conversion; that one is as capable of regeneration as the other. If the adult can be regenerated before he is baptized, as is generally believed, why not the infant also? It is also true that, while actual sin must await the dawning of the soul's powers before it can pollute them, it is in the province and power of the Spirit to anticipate this advanced state and to enter the soul in infancy. All Pedobaptists teach that the infancy of the infant is no barrier to the Holy Spirit. It is claimed, furthermore, that if baptism can avail for the infant, it can do so simply because the infant is already in the passive state. There are no means whereby this passivity may be generated in the infant, and no power to bless without it.

Since the Holy Spirit takes possession of this passive

condition, whether the faculties of the soul are in a germinal or matured state, the Antipedobaptist has no ground left for the assumption that, because the infant can not hear the Word and believe, it can not be regenerated. Maturity or immaturity in these faculties cuts no figure in the simple act of regeneration, since the infant has receptivity before it can accept or reject, for "where sin abounded grace does much more abound."

CHAPTER XXIII

EXCEPTION TAKEN TO SOME CLAIMS MADE FOR BAPTISM—
PROOF THAT THE INFANT'S STATE IS A PASSIVE ONE,
AND THEREFORE IT CAN BE REGENERATED WITHOUT
THE USE OF BAPTISM

EXCEPTION is taken to the claim which some authors make for baptism, to wit, that it is first necessary to generate this passive state in the infant. A quotation from one of these will be in place:

"In the case of the infant there is no conscious voluntary barrier [unbelief], and there is a *divinely wrought receptivity of grace*. . . . When we speak of a divinely wrought receptivity of grace, we imply that whatever God offers in His Word or element bears with the offer the power of being received. . . . The Word and the sacraments *per se* break up the absoluteness of the natural bondage; they bring *an instant possibility of salvation*." *

If "the Word and the sacraments *per se*" are necessary to "break up the absoluteness of the natural bondage," as this author claims, then in the case of the infant this bondage can not be broken up without them. If the sacrament of baptism joined with the Word were necessary to produce "a divinely wrought receptivity of grace and an instant possibility of salvation," then these effects are not possible before baptism, for baptism is the cause, they the result. Being necessary for one infant, they must be necessary for all, and if for all, then what becomes of those

* Krauth's "Conservative Reformation," pp. 439, 440.

infants which are not baptized? The logical conclusion must be that they are lost. Yet this writer, with many others of the same school, repudiates the theory that unbaptized infants are lost.

Catholics do not take advantage of the subterfuges of many Protestants, viz., that "the necessity for baptism is not absolute, but ordinary, and binds man, but not God; therefore cases of necessity are not intended by this; that "the baptism of intention is sufficient"; that "the holy and merciful God will think kindly of them [children of Christians who have died unbaptized]"; that "what He will do with them, He has revealed to no one"; that "baptism may not be despised, but God has reserved unbaptized infants to His own mercy"; that "God does wrong to no man." These evasions of a logical consequence the Catholic and Greek churches take no advantage of. The unbaptized infant is lost, they teach.

Protestants have ingeniously evaded this. The view of the Antipedobaptists is also an example of this evasion. They with others can not endure the thought that helpless infants are lost, but they only guess at the manner of their salvation.

Calvinistic writers who now claim that all infants that die are saved "because they are elect, or they would not die," are guilty of an assumption which, while it is unwarranted, at the same time betrays their extreme desire to escape the logical consequences of their doctrines of election and reprobation, so far as they pertain to infants. Dr. C. P. Krauth does not attempt to show how unbaptized infants will be saved, but boldly assumes it, and lays much stress upon the assumption that there is "some other way." How he can do this and not surrender his "divinely wrought receptivity" and "instant possibility of salvation through baptism" theories is a mystery. These are his words:

“When, then, in the mysterious Providence of this lover of these precious little ones, they are cut off from the reception of His grace by its ordinary channel [baptism], our Church still cherishes the *most blessed assurance* in the very existence of infant baptism that in *some other way* God’s wisdom and tenderness will reach and redeem them.”*

This is a mere assumption, utterly unwarranted. This author claims that baptism creates the capacity, secures the passive condition, and then regenerates the infant soul; but in case the infant dies it can be saved without baptism. How can this be? What is there in that case to effect this “divinely wrought receptivity of grace”? If the Word and the sacrament of baptism are necessary *per se* to “break up the absoluteness of the natural bondage,” if “they bring *per se* an instant possibility of salvation,” then what takes their place in the case of the unbaptized at death? What effects this necessary change?

The truth is, instead of baptism generating this passive condition in the infant’s soul, this state is there to begin with, and must be there as a prior condition in order that baptism may be effective and profitable. It is not within the province of baptism to prepare the soul for grace, but to bestow the grace after it is prepared. It is not in the province of any of the means of grace to do this. It is theirs to serve the ends and aims of grace; at most they can but assist the adult subject in bringing the soul into that state. But the infant, unable to cooperate actively with any of the means of grace, must be passive before those means can be effective. If it can be passive without the use of the means of grace, then the Holy Spirit can work independently of them. In the case of the adult, these means lead to repentance and conversion, and they to passivity, but in

* Evangelical Review, July, 1866, article on “Baptism,” by C. P. Krauth, D.D.

the infant the means of grace find this state already existing. The truth is, this "divinely wrought receptivity through baptism" is a chimera. To enable it to accomplish all that view claims, baptism must of necessity be more than a means of grace; it would also have to be a cause of that passivity which befits the infant for baptism. No such extraordinary efficacy can be Scripturally claimed for it. This is claiming more for baptism than the Roman *opus operatum* does, since the ministration of baptism, besides being an efficient cause of grace, is also the cause of breaking up "the absoluteness of the natural bondage," and of bringing "an instant possibility of salvation." This the *opus operatum* does not require.

The fact is, this "divinely wrought receptivity [passivity]" was never lost. The fall of man was not permitted to deprive us of this blessed heritage. If once lost there seems to be no provision for its restoration to the infant, and therefore all infants, baptized and unbaptized, that are dead must have perished. Divine wisdom foresaw that in this passivity lay their only hope; it is the only avenue left to their souls for saving grace. We therefore conclude that the fall, with all its dire consequences, did not rob us of that. The infant is passive, and baptism is not necessary to restore that which was never lost. Therefore exception is taken to this claim made for baptism.

CHAPTER XXIV

DEPRAVITY NO BARRIER TO THE INFANT'S PASSIVITY, OR
TO ITS REGENERATION—ALL INFANTS, HEATHEN OR
CHRISTIAN—IN A SAVED STATE—NO REASONABLE
OBJECTION CAN BE MADE TO THIS THEORY

THERE yet remains to be reckoned with the great fact of inborn depravity in the infant. Does the fact that the infant is depraved make its passivity impossible?

What is this depravity?

First, it is the loss of original sinlessness and holiness to the whole human race, through all subsequent time, in consequence of Adam's fall. Evil propensities, desires, and inclinations in a state of sin and guilt, with entire unfitness for heaven and exposure to eternal death, are also its direct fruits.

Second, this depravity likewise is unable of itself to worship God. It is also destitute of spiritual life. If the infant should die in this state it could not be saved, because it has not the life of Christ.

This is depravity with its direct and indirect results.

Now is this depraved state any barrier to passivity or the work of the Holy Spirit in the infant soul? It surely is, if that infant must necessarily be baptized first; it is also an insuperable barrier if it must first actively believe before it can be regenerated. But these have been shown to be unnecessary, since the infant is in spite of this depravity in a passive state, and that is sufficient to insure the Holy Spirit's work. A mere predisposition to evil,

without actual sin, does not preclude or prevent passivity. Depravity is there as a simple fact that needs control only. It needs to be dominated by saving grace. But if it is not subdued it does not remain a simple fact, but in due time it becomes rebellious and passivity is subdued by it. But so long as infancy lasts depravity continues a simple fact, and does not prevent passivity. Is it true that depravity survives as a simple fact in the adult even after his regeneration and through his entire religious life? It certainly does. Paul said: "I find then a law that when I would do good, evil is present with me." This law is the old depravity, which, tho subdued, still exists. Regeneration does not annihilate depravity, it only subjugates it. Now if it accompanies the adult Christian throughout life and yet does not prevent his passivity, why should it prevent passivity in the infant, particularly so as the infant's depravity has never advanced out of the inactive state?

Depravity, therefore, as a mere simple fact, is no barrier to passivity or regeneration.

We do well to keep in mind also the fact that all Pedobaptists must believe that infants are subjects of saving grace—in other words, that they are in a passive condition notwithstanding the depravity of their nature. It is not necessary for infants to repent or be converted first in order to become passive. The Antipedobaptists, however, will dispute this, but they can not do so successfully.

The fact that simple depravity and passivity can coexist in the infant is therefore a well-established fact.

Most theologians seem to have regarded depravity as necessarily so hostile to this passive state that the infant, as well as the adult, is thrown out of all reach of saving grace by it, and therefore that some such means as baptism is necessary to restore it, as if by magic, to a state of passivity. The fact that simple depravity and saving grace

coexist in the adult convert and believer throughout life, reveals the error of this, and clearly proves that as a simple fact depravity may coexist with passivity in the infant, and that the Holy Spirit may without coercion enter such a soul and garnish it for His own abode.

From the previous argument we are now prepared to proclaim that all infants are in a saved state, whether baptized or not, whether Christian or heathen. We can also be consistent in believing that all infants are saved at death, tho they are not baptized; that the Blessed Savior has made provision for all of them, and that the work of the Atonement is broad enough to reach all. We need not take the view of Pelagius, who, rather than believe in the damnation of infants, taught that, as they were innocent, they would without baptism have everlasting life on the ground of innocence alone. Nor need we like Augustine teach that, tho they were damned if not baptized, yet that damnation was so mild that he "would not say that it were better for them not to have been born." Nor need we in the semi-Pelagian teachings of Rome and the scholastics invent some dreary limbo, or *limbus infantum*, to which to consign all the hapless unbaptized infants that have died.

Nor are we perplexed to find "some other way" besides baptism to save them, and if it is not found, to fall back upon the so-called "uncovenanted mercies of God," or the vague surmises concerning "prevenient grace." Nor is it necessary to revive in our day the speculations concerning probation after death.

The Romanist, with his views respecting the marvelous efficacy of the sacrament of baptism, and the supreme authority of the Church and her priesthood, will condemn this view on sight, for he can not conceive how divine grace can be imparted to any soul without the intervention of the priest and the use of the sacraments. Also in Protestant

churches, in proportion as the efficacy of baptism is magnified, will this view appear objectionable; but of this by and by. Suffice it to say, that if the two facts are established—first, that the passive state is the one in which the Holy Spirit enters the soul and regenerates it; and, second, that the infant is, during its infancy, in the passive state—then all controversy is at an end. Saving grace does not want for anything else, but takes possession of the infant soul as its lawful habitation.

With these facts established, we can be consistent in believing in the saved condition of all infants, whether baptized or not. While we believe this, it is by no means necessary to ignore infant baptism; it has a prominent place as a sacrament, as important in the case of the infant as in that of the adult. But of this at its proper place.

Upon the question of the fate of unbaptized infants that die, some prefer to venture no opinion; yet they, indeed all Protestant theologians, entertain a hope that God has “some other way” by which unbaptized infants may be saved in case they die. Depravity alone is not able to damn the soul since Christ has died. The Augsburg Confession makes bold to say “that this innate disease, or original sin, is truly sin, and condemns all those under the eternal wrath of God,” etc.

But the view Lutheran theologians take of this is that original sin would certainly damn all infants if it were not for the redemption wrought by Christ. That redemption is sufficient to save all from its consequences. “Our Lord Jesus Christ, by the grace of God, tasted death for every man.” “As by the offense of one, judgment came upon all men to condemnation, even so by the righteousness of one, the free gift came upon all men unto justification of life.”

The Confession does not, however, attempt to show by what manner or means this is accomplished except by bap-

tism. But Luther's writings, elsewhere quoted, show that he believed, or hoped, that in all infants depravity was annulled through Christ's life and death. The declaration of Irenæus, "that Christ passed through infancy that He might sanctify infants," may have suggested this; whether it did or not, Luther in his marginal note on John xv:22 says: "Through Christ original sin is annulled, and *no man* since Christ's coming is condemned, unless he will not forsake it [original sin], that is, will not believe." *

Concerning this passage Krauth says: "It is not the doctrine of our Confession that any human creature has ever been or ever will be lost, purely on account of original sin. For while it supposes that original sin, if unarrested, would bring death, it supposes it to be arrested certainly and ordinarily by the Holy Spirit through the divine means rightly received, and throws no obstacle in the way of our hearty faith, that *in the case of infants dying without the means*, the Holy Spirit, in His own blessed way, directly and extraordinarily, may make the change that delivers the child from the power of indwelling sin." †

Is not this equivalent to admitting that baptism is not necessary to save the infant? If Lutheran theologians interpret the strong declarations of the Augsburg Confession concerning baptism and original sin in a light that admits all unbaptized infants to heaven at death; if by virtue of the Atonement simply, infants can be saved; if depravity is thereby annulled—then baptism can not be a necessity to this end. If the mere fact that Jesus has made His Atonement provides a sufficient remedy, then Lutheran theologians—the strongest Protestant objectors to the views herein set forth—are out of the way.

* C. P. Krauth, *Evangelical Review*, July, 1866, "Baptism," etc., p. 346.

† *Idem*, p. 346.

Certainly no theologian can or will object with any show of reason to the theory that the Holy Spirit enters the heart while it is in a passive state, and renews it. Neither, in view of the proof given, can he deny that the state of infancy is a passive one, one that receives even before it can either accept or reject, that is, passive before it can be conscious. Therefore the infant is quickened by the Spirit without outward baptism, since depravity is no barrier to saving grace in the passive soul.

It is now time to investigate the subject of faith in infants, for at this point the formidable objection, that "infants can not have faith," presents itself and must be satisfactorily answered

CHAPTER XXV

CAN INFANTS HAVE FAITH?—WHAT IS FAITH?—CAN FAITH SURVIVE IN THE INFANT?

THE infant must have faith to be a subject of saving grace. Delitzsch says, "Faith is an indispensable postulate of all regenerate life." The writer is in hearty accord with this. He has no sympathy with the view that seeks to account for the salvation of infants without faith; faith is a *sine qua non*.

There have ever been theologians who have considered it impossible for the infant to possess this requisite. The Jews practically ignored it in their maxim, "*Extra ecclesiam non dari salutem*." This is the maxim of Rome to-day, and it is based upon the assumption that the infant lacks saving faith, and the Church must supply it.

A no less distinguished theologian than Knapp says: "Nothing is said in the New Testament about such a faith. . . . Faith always presupposes knowledge and the power to exercise the understanding. Now since children have neither of these qualities, faith can not be ascribed to them." *

Another writer, Prof. George F. Holmes, of the University of Virginia, says: "Faith in the New Testament includes three elements; each and all are necessary to the full meaning of the word, while one or another may become prominent according to the connection, viz.: (1) full intellectual acceptance of the revelation of salvation; (2)

* "Christian Theology," p. 422.

adherence to the truth, and to the person of Christ thus accepted; (3) absolute and exclusive trust in the redeeming work of Christ for salvation."*

These three elements, he says, are necessary to the *full* meaning of the word.

Both writers are correct so far as "the full meaning" of faith is concerned, mature faith; but we are not seeking that in infants, neither is it necessary for them to possess it in such measure in order to be subjects of saving grace, any more than they should possess full consciousness and reason to fit them for baptism.

Knapp would have us understand also that "the mere want of faith is not damnable, but unbelief only, or the guilty destitution of faith." Concerning this it can be said that if the want of faith does not damn, neither can the infant be saved without it. It must have spiritual life to be saved; this is impossible without its "indispensable postulate"—faith. Salvation is dependent upon faith, therefore a theory that ignores faith in the infant neither saves nor damns it. Dr. Knapp's view is at fault.

The Arminian view also fails in like manner to save the infant. It assumes that depravity simply is destroyed by redemption, and that is all that is necessary for its salvation. Not so, however, for in addition, it must have the renewing life of Christ. Except we can find faith in the infant, this can not be. Therefore if Arminians insist that the infant can not be damned, tho it have not faith, then they must also admit that it can not be saved. Their theory necessarily consigns it to some middle state similar to that of Gregory Nazianzen and the Greek Church, for the infant can go neither to heaven nor to hell.

No theory of infant salvation is sound except it find faith in the subject. It is true that faith presupposes certain

* McClintock and Strong's Cyclopedia, vol. iii., "Faith," p. 455.

conditions, but that these are "knowledge," "understanding," "belief," and "will," in full power and activity, is here denied. Faith is capable of existence at a point as faint as any other natural or spiritual quality. We have already seen that spiritual life in all cases begins at an imperceptible stage, and that this is a universal law. The beginning of faith is no exception to this. It does not, Minerva-like, spring into existence fully endowed; it is necessarily feeble at first, particularly when all the faculties of the subject are in embryo.

But some may insist that active faith must precede the work of regeneration in the soul, introduce it, prepare the soul for it, and therefore it must of necessity be an active faculty with intelligence and understanding, and also a good degree of development such as it is not possible for the infant to possess. This view is certainly not correct. It is "with the heart man believeth *unto* righteousness," not *into* it. However, such active belief is necessary to the adult sinner only to restore him by the synergistic work of conversion to the passive condition of the little child; then the Holy Spirit regenerates him. But such belief is not faith, it is a mere natural quality, and can not be a spiritual one until after the soul is regenerated. Active faith is therefore not necessary to prepare the soul for regeneration.

Nor is faith some new faculty which infants for lack of knowledge can not possess. It is simply the natural faculties of belief and trust vitalized by the Spirit. The infant possessing these faculties as a complete individual, and in the passive state, needs no such agent as faith to prepare it for regeneration. It is true the infant can not be active like the adult, but activity is not necessary since its effect is simply to bring the adult soul into the state of passivity in which the infant is already. Besides, the initial energy

in regeneration is not to be found in either the infant or the adult, but in the Holy Spirit. The subject, as has been shown, is not active in regeneration, but acted upon. If the infant be passive, it can therefore be regenerated without active faith. Besides, faith is a fruit of regeneration, and can not therefore precede it in any case. But there is additional proof of this. If, as claimed, active faith must precede regeneration, then of necessity it is merely a natural faculty, like belief, confidence, and trust, because only the natural can precede regeneration. The word faith in common parlance is often used in this sense, but as a spiritual faculty such meaning may not be applied. Faith is "the gift of God" bestowed by the Holy Spirit; therefore it is one of the fruits of the Spirit, as is love, or any other of the nine fruits mentioned by Paul in Gal. v:22, 23. If, then, it be a fruit of the Spirit, it is not a natural faculty and can not in the nature of things precede a work of grace in the soul, any more than the fruit of the tree could precede the tree that bears it. It can not be fruit and at the same time a cause of that fruit, nor both cause and effect. It is a spiritual gift, and therefore can not precede the work of regeneration.

Let us not be confused as to the real nature of faith, for a clear understanding of it is vital to the subject of infant salvation. Many take it for granted that the infant can not have it because they regard it as some new faculty requiring a developed human intelligence and understanding. This is a mistake; it is not a new faculty, but the result of old ones newly endowed. These human faculties need be only in embryo, since the passive condition of the infant is all that the Spirit requires, and faith is assured. He breathes upon and endows them with spiritual life, and faith, one of the indispensable fruits of that life, is then bestowed. It is not a new faculty, but already existing

ones newly endowed with spiritual energy, power, and life. Delitzsch says: "Faith is a human condition of divine operation." This is correct; all the initial energy of faith is in the Holy Spirit. Only the conditions of it are in the infant subject; therefore there is no necessity that the infant be first able actively to believe and trust; all that is necessary is that it be in a state to receive the Spirit, then its feebleness will not stand in the way or prevent its receiving faith, since it is passive and endowed with receptivity without activity. It will be faith at its lowest point, faith in embryo simply, but true faith nevertheless.

The faith of the infant is too feeble to be active in attaining knowledge of, or giving assent to, or trusting in, the truths of God's Word, but it is in a fair way to overcome this feebleness by the natural law of development. It thus will accomplish all in due time. This feebleness is due solely to the natural or human condition of faith in the subject—its feeble belief, understanding, etc.—not to any weakness in the Spirit. The faith begun in infancy, in embryo, is the same faith which develops later to maturity. It is a mistake, therefore, to suppose that faith in its beginning must have mature belief, trust, and understanding; for them to be there in embryo is all that is required.

A clear understanding of what faith is can not fail to remove all the apparent difficulties, so that we need not stumble at the belief that infants may possess it. Add to this the fact that the infant itself has the capacity to receive and to appropriate both good and evil through heredity and during the prenatal period (having receptivity without activity, its feebleness being no barrier), what is there to prevent such a subject receiving spiritual life also?

Along with this life it must have faith as one of its

essential elements, since the whole includes all the parts. But this subject—faith in infants—being so important a feature in an attempt like this, it will be well to pursue our subject still further. Let the next inquiry be: Can faith survive in the infant for want of activity?

Are not these same faculties required to be active after regeneration in order that faith may survive? In other words, if “faith without works is dead,” then can a faith that is incapable of active work survive? Will it not perish from want of it?

James simply declares a fact when he says, “Faith without works is dead.” He does not mean to say that the failure to produce them is the cause of that death. No, but this: faith, if alive, necessarily produces works, and if they are not to be found in the adult, it is because the faith (professed) is dead. The absence of works is simply a proof that death has ensued, but that has not caused the death of faith. Actual sin in the adult has done that. Let it be understood, therefore, that faith is destroyed by *actual sin*, and not by the mere want of works. If, therefore, the infant is incapable of actual sin, there is no evidence to prove that faith, if once implanted, should not survive, since there is no sin to destroy it. Then simply because the infant can not bring forth works similar to those of the adult, we must not conclude that faith can not survive for want of them.

But may there not be activity of a certain kind before outward works are possible? If, however, it be a fact that there is absolute inactivity or stagnation, then this becomes a serious objection to the doctrine that infants have faith. A state of stagnation is a state of death. But the truth is there is no such thing as absolute stagnation anywhere; even the water collected in the depression between the hills, tho seemingly the best type of stagnation, is yet not ab-

solutely stagnant; evaporation goes on from day to day; the rains fill it; the miniature tidal wave each day causes it to ebb and flow. Every movement of the life that is in it frequently displaces every drop of the water, so that the whole is compelled to move many times a day. Absolute stagnation in nature is impossible. So inactivity is out of the question in the infant. Its natural powers are all the time developing; there is a higher stage presented with each succeeding day. Why, then, can not the Holy Spirit bestow a corresponding measure of faith? That faith certainly need not perish for want of activity and growth. It is only the minuteness of this faith that confuses. Persons who have never seen living organisms, which are too small for the naked eye, hear concerning them with incredulity; "impossible" they say. So a microscopic faith seems incredible, yet there is nothing impossible or unreasonable about it.

The fruit-bearing qualities of the tree are not productive of fruit during the first years of its life; must we conclude, on that account, that the tree is barren? By no means. Those qualities are alive and in a sense active, even tho the fruit is delayed.

Aside from this it has been shown that faith is capable of existing under apparently the most adverse conditions. Very frequently in adults there occur intervals when the mental faculties to which the soul looks for healthy activity are apparently in a state of absolute inactivity, as during the periods of sleep. Yet frequently as these periods occur, faith does not suffer. Also in old age, when these same faculties begin to decline, faith holds its own; it may even profit by the repose of sleep and the quiescence of age. But there is even a worse condition than either of these through which faith is required sometimes to pass: it is in case of delirium, mental aberration, and insanity.

All the faculties upon which faith depended for its activity are not only in a state of inactivity, but far worse than that; they oftentimes seem to be rebellious. Faith for the time being is not only compelled to retire, but it presents a sad spectacle to the sympathizing beholder. Yet after the lapse of days, weeks, and even months, when the mental faculties resume their normal activity, faith resumes hers also, as tho there had been no interim of suspension or delirium.

During sleep it may even be said that the soul is capable of some measure of activity; the inactivity is only apparent, not real.

Do we not read that God chose to make His mysterious revelations to some of His chosen ones while they slumbered? "I will make known myself unto him in a vision, and will speak unto him in a dream" (Num. xii: 6).

Daniel (viii: 18) says that Gabriel came to him while he was asleep. "Now as he was speaking with me I was in a deep sleep on my face toward the ground." Sleep, even a "deep sleep," was the state the angel preferred.

The Savior said: "So is the kingdom of God, as if a man should cast seed into the ground; *and he should sleep*, and rise night and day, and the seed should spring and grow up, he knoweth not how; for the earth bringeth forth fruit of herself" (Mark iv: 26-28).

As during sleep the activity of nature continues, so in sleep spiritual activity advances and the kingdom of God within the soul is active, yet we know not how.

We conclude, therefore, that the soul is not in a state of absolute inactivity during slumber. This being true, the state of the infant is not one of absolute inactivity, a state wherein faith could not exist on that account. Is not this implied in the significant words of the Savior (Matt. xi: 25): "I thank thee, O Father, Lord of heaven and earth,

because thou hast hid these things from the wise and prudent, and hast revealed them unto babes" ?

Also that other passage quoted by the Savior from the eighth Psalm: "Yea; have ye never read, Out of the mouth of babes and sucklings thou hast perfected praise?" (Matt. xxi: 16).

This latter passage certainly teaches that the state of infancy is not one of sheer impotency nor one of absolute inactivity. We see also the force of the Savior's words: "But whoso shall *offend* one of these little ones *which believe in me*, it were better for him that a millstone were hanged about his neck and that he were drowned in the depth of the sea." These little ones believe in Christ. How? Not actively, certainly, but they possess the embryonic belief in its normal passive state, and this the Holy Spirit vitalizes, and faith is the result. Yes, living faith in a growing state in the infant soul where it is nurtured and strengthened by the same Spirit in the adolescent subject as it continues to develop. There need be no fear that such faith can not survive in the infant, therefore, for want of activity. The indwelling Spirit finds there its chosen condition for growth and development, not only in faith, but in every other spiritual grace.

CHAPTER XXVI

HOW THIS PERSISTENCY OF FAITH IS ACCOUNTED FOR— EMINENT THEOLOGIAN WHO TAUGHT THAT INFANTS HAD FAITH OR ITS EQUIVALENT

BIBLICAL psychologists account for this persistency of faith through all these apparently adverse conditions in this way: They tell us that faith is "a human condition of divine operation." Its initial energy, therefore, is from a divine source, not a human one. They further assure us that this initial energy is not dependent for its life and persistency upon human conditions which are affected either by feeble or abnormal states. They say that it is not affected by even death itself. While it is true that the Scriptures ascribe the activities of faith and the conditions of it to the Spirit's and the soul's hoping, waiting, trusting, depending on, and resting in God, yet they nowhere say "the spirit believes, or the soul believes, because faith is an operation of the human ego, which is distinguished from spirit, soul, and body." They teach, indeed, in the words of Delitzsch, that "with the heart it is believed, because faith is a central, yea, the most central human operation; but, moreover, it distinguishes from the heart itself that which is itself believing in us."* As one of the best illustrations of this the twenty-sixth verse of the Seventy-third Psalm is quoted. Asaph says: "My flesh and my heart faileth; but Elohim is the strength of my heart and my portion forever." Upon this Delitzsch says: "His ego

*"Biblical Psychology," p. 174.

remains trusting in God, even altho the body, and even the heart—therefore the Spirit—and soul of life, or his external and internal man, decayed; even then he held fast to God as to the rock which abides when everything is wavering, and to the possession which must remain to him when all else is lost; he held fast to Him forever, himself imperishable, because associated with the imperishable. This recourse, breaking through all inward and outward contradictions, through sin, sorrow, death, and hell, to God the Redeemer; this longing after God's free, merciful love, as His own Word declares it, a longing, reaching forth, and grasping it; this naked, unselfish craving, feeling itself satisfied with nothing else than God's promised grace; this eagerness, absorbing every ray of light that proceeds from God's reconciled love; this convinced and safety-craving appropriation and clinging to the Word of grace; this is faith."*

This ego, he says, is the most internal nature of man, and is distinct from spirit, soul, and body, which are simply the threefold condition of his being. It is to the human ego that the work of restoring man to his condition must first of all address itself; and faith is simply "the union of the ego with the word of grace." The ego is superior to all those conditions which affect the body, soul, and spirit; therefore this faith may exist, be active, and survive in spite of them. Feebleness, sleep, even dementia itself, can not destroy it. Just as in the case of Asaph, it abides, tho "heart and flesh fail."

On these accounts there is not the least danger that faith would perish in the infant for a seeming want of activity. As "the indispensable postulate of all regenerate life," it can not only enter the soul, but can maintain itself there until the subject arrives at sufficient age to be active in its

*"Biblical Psychology," pp. 173, 174.

exercise. After all, there is nothing uncommon in this; this persistency or tenacity of faith is not peculiar to itself alone. The natural life of the body furnishes a parallel. That life begins, and holds sway, before any activity appears in its organs. There is life in the egg before the organs of physical life show the least signs of activity; the organs are there in process of development. No food is eaten, no air is breathed; the heart does not beat. Yet at the moment of completeness the shell is broken, and the occupant steps out into a higher life; for the first time it begins to breathe, the heart to beat, and the legs and wings to move. There was life some time before this outward activity began, a life that was independent of the activity of the organs themselves for its existence, as if it drew its strength from a source of supply that is inexhaustible and that is ever ready to avail itself of the least opportunity that offered to assert itself. The water-power of Niagara which has existed for countless ages, and for want of other means of exerting itself, has slowly hewn its way south for seven miles through the solid rock, yet has ever been ready to apply that same power in full or faintest force upon factory, or mill, or for locomotion, whenever there was adaptation to such end. So with natural life for the body; it is ever ready to assert and maintain itself, tho the conditions for it at its commencement are exceedingly faint and feeble. Its beginning is not dependent upon the maturity of the natural body, very far from it; like Niagara it accepts the humblest and feeblest conditions.

If this is true of natural life, it is also true of the spiritual; there is an exhaustless supply, and it can begin in the germinal state of the soul as well as in its maturity. Faith, one of its essential postulates, must also begin with it, and with it continue to exist through all the stages of development to the dawn of responsibility. It can do this, tho

this life be not capable of conscious activity, tho it can not produce the works of the adult. The conditions are all favorable to its existence; the source of its supply is infinite; there is also activity after its kind.

Assuming, then, that it has been proven that it is possible for the infant to have faith, we are safe in concluding that it is also possible for that faith to survive. Also from another fact this must be true: If faith can begin its life in the infant, it certainly can continue, because the conditions for its continuance are more favorable than for its commencement. This proposition will not be disputed, since the commencement of that life is more difficult, all things considered, than its continuance. The commencement of it demands that the source of life be active, and that the conditions of it be present also in the subject, while the continuance of it requires only the already existing conditions in a state of development. This makes the terms of continuance much simpler than those required for its commencement.

If it be remembered that the infant is a complete individual, differing only from the adult in the degree of its development; also that the initial energy of faith is not in man, but in the Holy Spirit, we need not be disturbed in the least on account of the infant's apparent inability to have faith, nor as to the continuance of faith in the infant soul after it has begun.

If the faith of Asaph could survive and remain trusting in God, even tho his body and heart decayed; if it held fast to God when all else is lost; if God could still be its rock and portion forever; then verily we need have no fears for the infant, since with such persistency and tenacity faith can survive in the infant's breast.

Respecting faith, Delitzsch says: "If faith were a work of man's own, with a human initiative, then this question

[whether infants can have faith] would have to be answered absolutely in the negative; but if faith is a human condition of divine operation . . . there is left a possibility to reply to the question in the affirmative. Depending on this, our old dogmatists affirmed it, when they said infants have faith, direct and simple from the Holy Spirit, whom they do not wickedly resist when they are baptized."*

Augustine is one of these dogmatists. In writing to a Pelagian he said: "Thou must number baptized infants among believers; thou darest not judge in any other way, if thou art not willing to be a manifest heretic. In baptized infants the Holy Spirit dwells, tho they know it not. They know not their own reason, which lies dormant as a feeble glimmer which is to be aroused with the advance of years."†

Luther believed that infants have faith. Calvin believed there existed the seed of faith in them.

Ursinus says: "They have an inclinatory faith, or inclination to faith."‡ Voetius says: "There is in them a root, faculty, supernatural principle, seed, or nursery from whence, in its own time, faith rises up. It is related to faith as the seed is to the plant, the egg to the bird, the bulb to the flower."

Chemnitz, pronounced "the first great theologian produced by the Reformation," says: "When we say infants have faith, it is not meant that they understand or have the consciousness of faith. This is certain that the Holy Spirit is efficacious in them, so that they can receive the grace of God and the remission of sins. The Holy Spirit operates in them in His own way, which it is not in our

* Delitzsch, "Biblical Psychology," p. 407.

† "De Verb. Apostol.," sermon xiv., vol. x., p. 221.

‡ In "Catechism," ques. 57.

power to explain. That operation of the Spirit in infants we call faith, and we affirm that they believe."*

There should not be any more mystery in the *modus operandi* of the Holy Spirit in the case of the infant than in that of the adult. Does not the Savior say (Mark x:15) that adults receive the kingdom of God by first becoming as the little child? This view is in harmony with that of Delitzsch: neither the understanding nor consciousness is necessary for the beginnings of faith, as he calls it "an operation of the human ego, which is distinguished from spirit, soul, and body. It originates back of these in the personal ego."†

Delitzsch also tells us that the Scriptures nowhere say that "the spirit believes, or the soul believes." It is an operation independent of the understanding or consciousness; it is possible in the case of the infant, since the infant is in complete possession of the ego, which he elsewhere says, is "self-conscious before man becomes conscious of himself."

Respecting faith in infants, Peter Martyr says: "Faith in infants is incipient. . . . The age of infancy is capable of the motions of faith, and Jeremiah and John are witnesses that this age can be graced by the Holy Ghost."

Dr. Krauth, in his "Conservative Reformation," says: "Infants do have receptive faith. . . . The Holy Ghost offers grace, and so changes the moral nature of the child [through baptism] that this nature becomes receptive of the grace offered. This divinely wrought condition we call receptive faith, and tho its phenomena are suspended, it is really faith, and as really involves what is essential to justification as does the faith of the adult."‡

After analyzing faith, Delitzsch asks: "Wherefore, then,

*"Examen. Conc. Trid.," ii., x., 14.

†"Biblical Psychology," p. 174. ‡"Con. Ref.," pp. 578, 580.

should God not be able to effect in the remotely glimmering consciousness of the child a germinal faith, just as well as a developed faith in the daylight consciousness of the adult, especially as even in the adult, not merely in sleep, but even in the midst of every taxing labor not of a religious character, also in conditions of mental darkness and delirium, this faith subsides out of the region of consciousness in unconsciousness without by that means losing its existence? Notwithstanding this seeming helplessness and bordering on despair, it breaks through these bonds again, and continues to subsist, as seen by God's all-penetrating eye. . . . Consciousness begins from a remote point of growth, when it is still as none, and even, indeed, actually still none; thus also faith must be able to begin from a remote point of growth, when it is still as if none, and even in fact actually none, but yet is already present in seed and germ. Even already in the life of the embryo the Scripture declares secret spiritual occurrences."*

This profound thinker then says: "We are teaching in this nothing essentially different from what is affirmed by Thomasius, and Martensen also."

This same writer analyzes faith; he distinguishes between faith as "*actus directus*" and as "*actus reflexi*." The first, simply as a direct result of the grace of God, is the longing, the reaching forth toward salvation, of the ego. The latter is all this, together with divine assurances, joyous self-certainty, an experimental seeing and tasting; but this latter does not belong to the essence of faith. The *actus directus* is "the *forma fidei essentialis*." It justifies the soul, tho it has no religious experience. We become righteous through it, and not by the *actio reflexa*. This faith, as *actio directa*, is within reach of the infant, tho it have not consciousness, since its state is not the opposite of con-

* Delitzsch, "Biblical Psychology," pp. 414, 415.

sciousness, but consciousness in embryo simply, a growing consciousness. The threefold nature of the infant already exists; it is a complete person, whose ego is even now self-conscious, tho the individual is not conscious of himself. The infant, therefore, is within reach of faith, as *actus directus*, but not as *actus reflexi*.

CHAPTER XXVII

THE GENERAL TENOR OF THE SCRIPTURES FAVORS THIS THEORY OF INFANT SALVATION

IN a single chapter it will be impossible to do more than give some hints at the proof that the Bible favors this theory of infant salvation. A large volume the size of the present would be required to treat this claim thoroughly and properly. It is claimed, however, that the whole general tenor of the Scriptures favors this theory; that they contain no declaration either to an individual or to humanity at large which contradicts it. That they contain warnings to the "ungodly" and the "sinner," is not denied; but that these were in a saved state in their infancy is confidently asserted. They became ungodly and sinful when they became old enough to sin. This will appear from the proof given. It is claimed that the Scriptures as a whole are addressed either to those who were servants of God, or had been so. The ungodly, the hypocrites, and the backslidden therein addressed were, in their infancy, in a state of grace. The Scriptures contain no message to a class that was never in a saved state. If it be true that only those infants who are reached by the means of grace are saved, there must be an overwhelming majority who grow up in sin, and belong to a very large class usually called sinners, who have never become subjects of saving grace. Now if there is such a class, then five-sixths of the human family belong to it. Strange indeed that the Scriptures contain no message to such a large class, if it exists.

The Bible is terrible in its denunciation of sinners and the wicked, but it is claimed that all such were once subjects of saving grace. The prophets refer to the idolatry and wickedness of Israel and Judah repeatedly, but always as the wickedness of those who were once in a state of grace. Their sin is that of "backsliding," "departing from God." This is the case even where the whole nation is addressed. Hosea says: "Ephraim is joined to idols, let him alone" (Hosea iv:17). By Ephraim is meant all that belonged to the ten revolted tribes—all Israel. This idolatry which joins them to idols the same prophet denominates "backsliding." "And my people are bent to backsliding from me" (Hosea xi:7).

Jeremiah refers to the sins of his people as backslidings: "Thy backsliding shall reprove thee"; "Hast thou seen that which backsliding Israel hath done?"; "Backsliding Israel committed adultery"; "Backsliding Israel hath justified herself"; "Return, thou backsliding Israel," etc., etc. (Jer. ii:19; iii:6, 8; iii:14). Israel had fallen from a state of grace.

The terms in which the prophet refers to this people clearly indicate that this sin of backsliding was national, not simply individual. The names "Ephraim" and "Israel" are representative of the whole ten tribes. Old and young are involved, with so few righteous exceptions that these are not taken into the account. But how could backsliding be national unless the whole nation had at one time been in a state of grace?

This time must have been during the infancy of each individual. The Jew did not hesitate to teach that the youngest could enter into covenant with God. No exception was made on account of age.

In this particular, the Old Testament drew no line of distinction between the infant and the adult. The infant

of the proselyte was baptized as well as the adult himself. Sacrifices were offered for it, as well as for the adult. In short, the infant was included in all the covenant blessings with the adult. The covenant prescribed conditions with which the infant could not actively comply, but it presented the necessary passive condition of soul, and this was all that was required. The covenant anticipated the active obedience which the infant should render in due time if carefully trained. Certainly there must have been grace in its heart, since that alone could have made such anticipation possible. In fact the Abrahamic covenant demanded this preexisting state of grace as a condition prior to the infants becoming subject to it.

It is doubtless this view of the case that led the old prophets to call Israel a backslidden nation, because all the people had been subjects of grace from infancy. Hence Isaiah exclaims: "Ah, sinful nation, a people laden with iniquity, a seed of evil-doers, children that are corrupters: *they have forsaken the Lord, . . . they are gone away backward*" (Isa. i: 4).

And Jeremiah exhorts: "Return, thou backsliding Israel, saith the Lord, and I will not cause mine anger to fall upon you" (Jer. iii: 2). And Hosea reiterates: "For Israel slideth back as a backsliding heifer" (Hosea iv: 16).

We are safe, then, in these conclusions: First, Israel's sin was national; second, it was the sin of backsliding, therefore as individuals the people were once in a state of grace.

So far, the general trend of the Scriptures favors the theory that all infants are in a saved state.

We are strengthened and even confirmed in this view by the frequent use of the word "return," and its significance. The Hebrew word *shoov* is used more than a thousand times in the Old Testament. It means "to return," "to be re-

stored " to a former state, or owner, or to Jehovah. When Israel is commanded to repent of her backslidings, *shoov* is used. She is not commanded to turn (*haphak*), but to return (*shoov*). This is of general application. Why "return" instead of "turn," unless the people referred to once were righteous? Those denominated "wicked," "unrighteous," "revolting," "rebellious," are commanded to return (*shoov*),—to be restored to a former state of favor with God. In Deut. xxx., when Israel is scattered among the nations because she has "forsaken the covenant of the Lord their God," and "served other gods"; if she "shall return [*shoov*] unto the Lord," then "the Lord will return [*shoov*] and gather" her. So Samuel commanded "all the house of Israel, saying, If ye do return [*shoov*] unto the Lord with all your hearts, then put away the strange god" (1 Sam. vii: 3). The Psalmist says of Israel while in the desert: "When he slew them, then they sought him, and they returned [*shoov*] and inquired," etc. (Psalm lxxviii: 34).

The Israelites did not turn [*haphak*] to go for the first time to the Lord, but returned (*shoov*) to Him.

Job says: "If thou return [*shoov*] to the Almighty thou shalt be built up," etc. (Job xxii: 23).

Nehemiah says: "When they returned, and cried unto thee, thou heardest them," etc. (Neh. ix. 28).

Also in 2 Chronicles: "And if thy people Israel . . . shall return and confess thy name, etc. (Chron. vi: 24).

Isaiah says: "Let the wicked forsake his way, and the unrighteous man his thoughts, and let him return," etc. (Isa. iv: 7).

Jeremiah: "Return, thou backsliding Israel, saith the Lord" (Jer. iii: 12).

Ezekiel: "Turn ye, turn ye [*shoov*] from your evil ways, for why will ye die?" etc. (Ezek. xxxiii: 11, 12, 14, 18, 19).

So we could quote from Hosea, Joel, Amos, Obadiah, Micah, Zechariah, and Malachi.

It was not that the people should seek God for the first time, but that they were to return to Him, to repent of their backslidings. A careful study of the Old Testament will satisfy the reader that the references given establish the fact that all Israel was in a backslidden condition; that at one time they were reckoned among the servants of God, and that the remedy for their backslidings lay in their return to God.

Now how are we to account for the fact that all Israel was in this backslidden condition except that the people were from their infancy the children of God? In no other way could all have become righteous. In no other way can you reckon them righteous as a nation, or backslidden as a nation. It is not reasonable to suppose that at a later period than infancy they all—generation after generation—would have become righteous.

It may be alleged that they became such by the rite of circumcision; through it they covenanted with God. From whence, then, came the righteousness of Abel, Enoch, Noah, Abraham, and all those who were the servants of God before the rite was established? Abraham is called "the father of circumcision to all them who walk in the steps of that faith *which he had, being yet uncircumcised.*" Somehow Abraham obtained this faith, and maintained it until in the ninetieth year of his age, when he was circumcised. To Abraham circumcision was simply the sign and seal of the righteousness which he already possessed through faith, "when he was yet uncircumcised" (Rom. iv:11). The most reasonable supposition is that Abraham, being a child of grace in his infancy, was enabled to continue in that grace until called of God to become the head of a great nation. However this may be, Jewish infants are regarded as sub-

jects of grace, and circumcision is not to confer grace for the first time, but is the sign or seal or token of that covenant of grace under which they were born. In this instance all were reckoned as righteous, hence as a nation they could be reckoned such; or if as a nation they had backslidden, then as such they were commended to "return" (*shoov*).

We conclude, therefore, that the general trend of the Old Testament favors the theory that there is no such class as is usually denominated sinners, since it has no message for such, but that all were once subjects of grace, and they were such in their earliest infancy.

Let us now turn to the New Testament for additional proof. It is a fact that the New Testament as a whole is addressed to those who are by profession, or grace, or both, in some way connected with the Church of God. The Sermon on the Mount is directly and indirectly a severe rebuke to pharisaism, as are also many of the Savior's other teachings and parables. "The Good Samaritan," "The Wicked Husbandman," "The Marriage of the King's Son," "The Great Supper," "The Pharisee and the Publican,"—these parables would have no meaning but for their relation to pharisaism. These Pharisees were all circumcised members of the Jewish Church, and therefore all children of the Covenant. Nor can any of the other parables be construed to teach that there was in the Savior's mind at the time He uttered them a class of sinners that had never been subjects of grace. True, publicans and sinners are mentioned, but these were Jews also, and as such were once children of the Covenant.

Some of the parables of the Savior have direct reference to those who were at the time either servants of God or unfaithful and backslidden. What was the Prodigal Son but a typical backslider. He had been a favored child of

his father. Presumption led him to ask for his portion, and to leave his father's house. The son wasted his substance in riotous living. His return to his father is the return of the penitent backslider, and as a son he is restored to his father's favor, and to the family of which he had previously been a member. In fact, he had never entirely ceased to be a member, since his father had never cast him off. He did not leave his father's house as a rebel or an outcast; he left it as a son,—he had always sustained the relation of a son. He ignores this relation for a season, but accepts it again, and as a son returns and is received most heartily as a son. So far as this parable is concerned it can not be interpreted to mean that the prodigal was ever anything but a son.

The parable of the lost sheep affords another illustration of the same kind. Before the sheep wandered away, it belonged to the fold; had been carefully cared for by the same shepherd as the others. It was sought and found and restored to the fold as tho it had never ceased to be one of its number. The ninety-and-nine that did not wander away are to be likened unto those who are so carefully trained that they never leave the fold. Having been born and reared in the fold, they "need no repentance." They have always been "just persons."

Also the parable of the wise and foolish virgins teaches that all the ten were privileged alike at the outset. All had lamps, and all had oil in their lamps. All were entitled to take extra vessels with oil in them, also to join the procession. The foolish virgins fail finally because they did not take enough oil; their lamps went out before the bridegroom came. Want of proper precaution, and not their original condition, paved the way to their final rejection. It was their after-neglect, and not their unsaved state at the outset, that led to their failure. There is room in

this parable to infer that all these virgins were from infancy in a state of grace.

The same is true of the parable of the talents; also of that of the pounds. Both teach that those to whose care the respective trusts were committed were "*servants*" at the time. They were even trusted servants, so recognized by the Master who gave to each his amount. There was no doubt as to their trustworthiness. The success or failure of these respective servants was due not to the grace bestowed upon the successful, or its denial to the unsuccessful, but to the fact that one class proved "good and faithful," the other "wicked and slothful." So far as grace is concerned, each had sufficient to begin with; and so far as we may judge, all had been servants from the beginning.

The same is true of the parable of the laborers in the vineyard. They were all laborers; all were seeking labor. Those who did not enter the vineyard until the eleventh hour stood without because "no man hired them" sooner. They were ready to enter before they were hired. Those who went in at the first hour were on this account entitled to no more wages and received no more than those who entered at the last hour. It was no fault of those who went in at the eleventh hour that they did not enter in the morning. They were as eager and as well prepared to labor as those who went in early.

In the parable of the unmerciful servant, a certain king would take account of his servants. One owed him ten thousand talents; instead of selling him and his wife and children to pay the debt, the king "loosed him and forgave him the debt." But this same servant went to a fellow servant who owed him, and because he could not pay the debt cast him into prison. When the king saw this he was wroth and called him a "wicked servant," and

delivered him to the tormentors. Wicked as he had become, he had sustained the relation of servant. He, while in this relation, had become unmerciful and wicked.

The parable of the two sons is of the same import. One son at first refused to go and work in the vineyard, but afterward repented and went. The other promised to go, but went not. Both of them were sons, belonged to the same family, and had a common father. The fact that they were sons shows that they stood in the same relation to their father, except that one afterward did the will of his father, the other did not.

The parable of the wicked husbandmen is intended to teach that there will be those who sustain proper relations to God in the beginning who will fail in the end. "A certain householder planted a vineyard, and let it forth to husbandmen, and went into a far country for a long time." A servant was sent to obtain his share of the fruit. They beat him and sent him away empty. Another and another was sent with no better results. Finally the son was sent, and "they killed him." This parable was addressed to the Jews, all of whom in their infancy were in covenant relations with God.

These very husbandmen at the time the vineyard was let to them were recognized as proper persons to be entrusted with the vineyard. Their wickedness was the result of conduct after they became husbandmen. .

The parable of the barren fig-tree represents the professor of good deeds who, as a fig-tree, should bear fruit, but fails. It has no reference to a person that never was in the kingdom of God, but to those who while in it fail to bear fruit. Before cutting it down, however, it was to be cultivated.

The parable of the unjust steward is intended to represent one who was recognized as a proper person to act

as steward, one who was looked upon as safe, and who doubtless was safe at the outset, but later developed the *unjust* character. He, therefore, is to be likened to one who starts well on his career, but makes shipwreck afterward.

It is indeed remarkable that the Savior should have chosen in each of these instances figures and characters that were in covenant relations with God even from infancy. Those of them who were unfaithful, wicked, and slothful became such after they had been accepted as trustworthy subjects.

Not one of these parables can be applied to a person or class of persons who were at the time of their selection believed to be in an unsaved state.

There yet remain two parables concerning which it may be claimed that from them no such conclusion can be drawn: the Marriage of the King's Son, and the Great Supper. The accepted interpretation has been, that those who were gathered from "the highways and hedges, lanes and alleys" were sinners; they had never been children of the Covenant. It is not denied that those to whom the invitation was first extended, but who did not come, were Jews. They are reckoned as backslidden and apostate, because, in the first parable, the guests who were first summoned, maltreated and even killed the servants sent to call them; and in the second parable, those who were invited to the great supper, made vain excuses for non-attendance. They were all of them Jews, and similar in character to those who in the Old Testament were commanded to return to the Lord. But of what class were those who were gathered "quickly," indiscriminately, constrainedly, from the streets and lanes of the city, the highways and hedges of the country; from the poor, the maimed, the blind, and lame, both bad and good? Have

we the right to infer that these were of a different character from those first invited? The fact that they were to be constrained to come, and that the servants were to secure them "quickly," because the supper was ready, would indicate that their relation to the masters of these respective feasts was satisfactory. It would argue that their condition was such that no previous preparation was necessary. Also that tho some were "bad," yet the sequel shows they were not so bad as those who were first invited. The ordinary interpretation is: that the class last invited was composed of persons that needed some previous preparation, that they had nothing in common with the Christian character or the masters of these feasts; but in view of the fact that they supplied the table with guests so quickly, it is argued that they had not been always sinful and rebellious, but rather that they were proper and acceptable guests. Not a line is given to indicate their unfitness, but, on the contrary, they were ready on call. The fact that they were willing to respond, and did go, would also argue that they were ready. True, there was one of the guests, only one, who had not on a wedding-garment. The fact that all the rest had them only strengthens the conclusion of the general readiness. Surely there can be found nothing in either of these parables that would indicate that these guests had never been saved; if such had been the case it would have been mentioned, as also their previous preparation, if such were necessary, for their respective feasts.

If the latter class that responded and went were Gentiles, then they displayed a better spirit than the first. It is evident that the masters of the respective feasts regarded them worthy.

These, with the other parables referred to, seem to apply to a class that was not always in a sinful state, but rather in a saved one.

Before leaving the Four Gospels it is worthy of remark that they have not any message to a class of sinners who were always such; but they have messages to those who had fallen, or were in danger of it, and to those who needed more light to lead the Christian life. Also to hypocrites who had lost their covenant relation with God.

Passing now to the Epistles, we find that they are addressed exclusively to Christian individuals and churches. If there is a class that was never in a saved state, we find no message among these epistles to prove it. They were written to advise, direct, and warn those who are already in the Church of Christ. Even the terrible rebukes of the Second Epistle of Peter, also those in the Epistle of Jude, are intended for such.

The Revelation of St. John contains a message unto each of the Seven Churches of Asia, but none to a class that was never saved. Ephesus had lost her first love; Pergamos, Thyatira, Sardis, Philadelphia, and Laodicea, each receive a message containing a rebuke or a warning from the Spirit; Smyrna alone receives one entirely commendatory. Strange indeed that the Holy Spirit had no message on that occasion for a class, if such there was that had always been in a lost condition. Out of so many addresses and messages in the Old and New Testaments, there is not one such letter or message.

When once this fact is recognized, it is impossible not to raise the inquiry, Why is this? The answer is, that if such a class exists it would be recognized by the Scriptures. Idolatrous nations are named and their sins condemned, but in all this the Bible does not designate them as a people that were from birth entire strangers to saving grace; on the other hand, it denounces their abominations; assures us that they were in a sense accountable for them; details the fearful retributions which divine wrath visits upon them.

In fact, there seems to be little, if any, difference in God's dealings with these heathen nations and those of the highly favored Jews. Each are held accountable, as if they had forfeited the favor of God, of which they as individuals had in early life been in possession. The truth is, that some of the most remarkable examples of devotion to God came right out from among these wicked and idolatrous nations. Noah stands alone among the millions of his wicked generation. Abraham is called of God out of Ur, a desperately idolatrous city. Melchisedek, king of Salem, is a priest of the Most High God, yet a Canaanite and king of a Canaanite people. Job comes from the land of Uz. These few, with the exception of Noah, were doubtless the representatives of thousands of others, as Elijah, tho he knew it not, represented seven thousand others who had not bowed to Baal. These remarkable examples seem almost to warrant the conclusion that they were subjects of grace in infancy, that grace was preserved to them while multitudes similarly favored forfeited theirs. There are doubtless to-day among heathen nations thousands of just persons who by preserving the grace of infancy "are a law unto themselves" (Rom. ii: 14). Tho not commissioned of God, as Noah and Abraham were, to perform a special work, they are nevertheless to be numbered among the just. The "great multitude" which John saw before the throne in his day—so great already that it "could not be numbered"—was "of *all nations*, and kindreds, and people, and tongues," while the Jews only had the true knowledge of God. The Ninevites were a true heathen, idolatrous people when Jonah was sent with a verbal message to them, but their intelligent and speedy repentance indicates that their spiritual instinct must at one time have been quickened by grace.

We make the claim that the Scriptures nowhere contra-

dict the theory that heathen and Christian infants are not in a saved state. We claim that, on the contrary, they favor it. "As by the offense of one, judgment came upon all men to condemnation, even so by the righteousness of one, the free gift came upon all men *unto justification of life.*" How can this be true if the vast majority never taste of grace?

Such is the general tenor of the whole Bible. Why is there so much reproving of sin, yet all that sin the result either of backsliding or apostasy alone? If there is a class that have always been sinners, it is a very large class, many times more numerous than the Christian. Why are not these reproved also, since Jesus died to save all? It can be accounted for only in one way, and that is by assuming that there is no such class; that altho they are by nature the children of wrath, yet all are reached by saving grace in infancy and admitted into the family of God, and remain there until in later life they sin, to be restored, if ever, by repentance and belief in Christ.

There are some very practical lessons to be drawn from this fact. Attention will be given them in the concluding chapter of this book.

CHAPTER XXVIII

AN OBJECTION ANSWERED—THIS THEORY FAVORS THE DOCTRINE OF IRRESISTIBLE GRACE—THE MEANS OF GRACE OR BAPTISM NOT NECESSARY TO SAVE THE INFANT—SOME LIGHT UPON THE SALVATION OF THE HEATHEN AFFORDED BY THIS THEORY OF PASSIVITY

It will be well to anticipate here an objection which may be made to the theory that all infants are saved because in a passive state. It might be urged that it can be consistent only when associated with the Calvinistic view of God's sovereignty and irresistible grace.

What is irresistible grace? Jonathan Edwards defines it as follows: "That is said to be irresistible which overcomes all our opposition, resistance, and endeavors to the contrary, and we are said to be unable to do a thing when our supposable desires and endeavors to do it are insufficient." *

Augustinian theologians teach that this irresistible grace "can accomplish its object, when and where and how it will."

Dr. Knapp says: "Augustine and his followers deduced the doctrine of the irresistible grace of God as something which is miraculous in its nature, and which according to His unconditional decrees He bestows upon some men and withholds from others." †

The Westminster Confession of Faith, in respect to in-

* Edwards on the Will, sec. 3, p. 9.

† "Christian Theology," p. 456.

fants, says: "Elect infants dying in infancy are regenerated and saved by Christ through the Spirit, who worketh when, where, and how He pleaseth."*

Dr. Hodge distinguishes between common grace, which is only moral in its effects, and efficacious grace, which is spiritual. He admits that common grace may be resisted, but efficacious grace can not be successfully withstood. The efficacy of this in regeneration depends neither upon the active cooperation nor the passive non-resistance of its subject, but solely upon its nature and the purpose of God. He also says: "But if the special work of regeneration, in the narrow sense of that word, be the effect of Almighty power, then it can not be resisted, any more than the act of creation. The effect follows immediately on the will of God, as when He said: 'Let there be light, and there was light.' "†

In each of these quotations the irresistible power of divine grace is maintained. It has power to work efficaciously when, where, and upon whom it will. In no just manner can it be claimed that passivity in the infant must necessarily be associated with the doctrine of "irresistible grace," because that doctrine implies that there is resistance of some sort, direct or indirect, in its subject, else why an irresistible grace? Bear in mind, as elsewhere proven, that this is not true of the infant; that depravity, as a mere fact, interposes no obstacle, no resistance to grace, and can not until its subject becomes responsible and active. Until then the soul remains non-resistant and passive, and welcomes grace. There is no necessity for irresistible grace in such a subject, none whatever, and what is not necessary it is fair to presume that infinite wisdom would not employ.

* Chap. ix., §§ 1-3.

† Hodge, "Systematic Theology," vol. ii., p. 688.

Furthermore, it is not necessary to accept the doctrine of irresistible grace in order to account for this state of passivity in the infant. The Calvinist assumes that election and irresistible grace effect this in the cases of all infants who die, and that it is the only consistent and tenable theory in accounting for the salvation of all such.

But this is wholly unnecessary. This state of passivity in the infant is there, not because produced by grace, but because the fall alone could not carry the soul of the infant beyond it.

This is clear from the fact that it did not do it; it destroyed original holiness and entailed natural depravity; but natural depravity as a mere fact is not incompatible with passivity, as has been proven. We have seen that it is present in the adult through each of the steps to holiness, —repentance, conversion, regeneration, and justification; and even through the progressive steps of sanctification. By conversion the soul of the adult becomes passive as that of the little child, but his natural depravity still continues to exist as a simple fact. Passivity and natural depravity can and do coexist in the infant's soul, as well as in the adult Christian's. The fall did not destroy this passivity nor carry the soul beyond it. It is but reasonable to suppose that God would not suffer His creature, man, to be swept so far by the Fall that this passivity would be destroyed. If He had, then the infant would have been beyond the reach of saving grace; this would destroy the only hope of salvation that remained. To saving grace would be left no possible approach to the soul. Even irresistible grace could effect nothing, since such a soul would be hurled into a state as fixed as was the gulf between the rich man and Abraham. Let all passivity be lost, and the hopeless state of soul called blasphemy against the Holy Ghost is the result. The soul may lose either in

whole or in part the grace it possessed in infancy, and lapse into what is called a sinful condition, as is the case with the vast majority of men. Yet it may be in a state of lapsed passivity. The Holy Spirit will still call through the truth, and through repentance and conversion it may be restored to full passivity, the same condition that existed in infancy. Grace, then, is in control once more. Passivity is in full possession and welcomes grace. But the infant never having lost passivity is naturally in a state that welcomes grace, and therefore does not require irresistible grace to save it. No; passivity being in the infant as a birthright, simply lets the Holy Spirit work in it to will and to do of His own good pleasure. What need is there of irresistible grace when there is no resistance?

As the empty lungs of the new-born babe are fully capacitated to receive passively the air, so the soul of the infant is equipped for the reception of grace. The infant's lungs expand readily, involuntarily, as if to welcome the free and willing element. They are in a non-resisting state, ready to be acted upon. They have a natural capacity for receiving the air. So the infant soul has the natural capacity for grace; and as freely as the air enters its lungs, so freely does grace enter its soul. There is no need of "irresistible grace" to produce this state. It is there as an inheritance—a birthright preserved to us in spite of the fall. It was untouched, and for this reason the soul has receptivity for grace before it has acceptivity. For this reason, and this alone, it is not a spiritual imbecile.

If irresistible grace is not necessary to produce this passive state in the infant, neither is common grace, because it was never lost. It follows, therefore, as a matter of course, that the means of grace are not necessary to produce it in the infant. However necessary they may be to restore the adult, they are needless in the case of the infant.

If grace itself is not required first to garnish and prepare the infant soul for its own occupancy, then there can be no need of the means of grace, since the Holy Spirit can and does act independently of them. When passivity is present, all the preparation necessary for the introduction of grace is already present.

Practically this theory throws the door of salvation wide open for all infants—heathen as well as Christian. The Holy Spirit is left to operate freely without being compelled to wait for irresistible grace, or for common grace, with its means; or for preparation after death, as the Antipedobaptist teaches.

This theory that the passive state is not absolutely dependent on the means of grace will aid greatly in clearing up the mystery surrounding the question of the salvation of the heathen. If the inquiring, anxious heathen are led, “by the things that are made,” to see and understand “the invisible things of him from the creation of the world; even his eternal power and Godhead (Rom. i: 20), then there is no insuperable barrier to their passivity, since the ordinary means of grace are not absolutely necessary to that end, except for all those who have stubbornly resisted the means of grace.

There is, therefore, an avenue open to heathen as well as to infants by which they may be saved. As infants the heathen are saved in their infancy, and this grace may be retained, since without the means of grace and by the light of nature and their own consciences alone they may maintain passivity. Yea, more: repentance and conversion are even possible for the heathen. If the dying thief without baptism or the Lord’s Supper could on the same day with his Savior enter Paradise simply because he was penitent and believed, so may penitent heathen find sufficient light “by the things that are made,” to enable them to become

subjects of grace. This is the more possible because in infancy all heathen are subjects of grace. If salvation was possible for the thief while suspended in terrible agony on the cross, without previous instruction and with a jeering, heartless mob at his feet, why may not the calm, contemplative soul of a heathen find sufficient light from nature, so that the Holy Spirit may come to his aid and lead him to a saving knowledge of the truth?

And such instances may not be so rare as we may be inclined to believe. The apostle says of the heathen: "They are without excuse." These words incline one to believe that the responsibility of the heathen is greater than is supposed, and the possibility of their salvation is greater, since it is not an absolute necessity for them to fall within the reach of the so-called means of grace, for even adult heathen may become passive without them, and doubtless do in many instances.

In the parable of the laborers in the vineyard, who are meant by those who went in at the eleventh hour if not heathen who were eager for the truth? They had waited patiently and passively for the opportunity to come. No man had hired them. They did the best they could—"waited"; they could have been none but heathen, or they would have been invited sooner. It is not surprising they received as much wages as they who went into the vineyard the first hour.

The rapidity with which the Church developed among the Gentiles in apostolic times is evidence that many to whom they preached were waiting for some one to "hire them." Doubtless some of those who came from the "highways" to the marriage-feast of the King's son, also of those who came from the "highways and hedges" to the Great Supper, were heathen, who, because of their passive condition of soul, were ready to accept the invitation and

partake of the respective feasts. Among the "great multitude" in heaven which John saw "OF ALL NATIONS," there must of necessity have been heathen, since it was long before the knowledge of God had become known among many nations of the earth. We will not press this matter further, but the preponderance of evidence is in favor of the view that the heathen may become passive subjects of grace, and that some are saved.

CHAPTER XXIX

GRACE IS SECURED THROUGH INFANT BAPTISM

HAVING found capacity in the infant for grace, together with the ability to receive and appropriate before it can accept or reject, it is safe to conclude that the infinite Holy Spirit will not be confined in His operations to the act of baptism administered by finite agents. He will certainly rescue all infants from the thralldom of sin. He will not suffer redeeming grace to be tied unconditionally to the ordinary means.

We lose much when we magnify the means of grace in the hands of finite agents at the expense of saving grace itself. Let baptism have its proper place by all means. Having that, it must not be denied that grace is imparted through it. It is more than a mere sign or seal of grace to be bestowed. There is nothing in this book to conflict with the statement that grace is conferred upon the infant in baptism; it is contended only that this grace is not initial, or necessarily regenerating in its character, since the infant is a child of grace before it can be baptized. Pedobaptists teach that baptism has taken the place of circumcision; this being true, we are taught that Abraham when ninety years old was circumcised as "a seal of the faith which he had yet being uncircumcised." He was circumcised "that he might be the father of all them that believe, tho they be not circumcised; that righteousness might be imputed unto them also." If righteousness preceded circumcision in believers, so righteousness can precede bap-

tism in the passive infant soul, and baptism can both confer grace and be a sign and seal of grace previously bestowed. There seems to be no reason whatever to doubt that additional grace is imparted through baptism; it may even be subjective in a sense—a higher degree than was previously possessed. Grace that the infant can not obtain in any other way may be secured by it. In the case of circumcision Paul propounds the query: "What profit is there in circumcision?" And then answers it: "Much every way." It is not possible for any one to say just what the advantage of infant baptism is, but it is "much every way";—so much, indeed, that it should be sacredly observed. Let no one despise it, rather let its importance be magnified, since the infant is passive and therefore a proper subject for it.

The writer finds his own view fully expressed by a recent Lutheran author of reputation. We quote:

"Once when Jewish mothers brought their children to Jesus to bless them, and the disciples would have repelled them, because these little children understood nothing as yet of the matter, Jesus expressly reprovéd them, and took the children in His arms, laid hands upon them, and blessed them. [He did not say they were 'under the power of the devil.'] And why should not we, too, bring our children to Him, and feel certain that He receives them and gives them His blessing? It is of this that baptism is the expression.

"Thus were the disciples taught the position occupied by children with respect to the kingdom of heaven. Baptism in church times corresponds with the blessing then bestowed on children by the Lord Jesus."*

This is in full accord with the views herein expressed. If the infant is not "under the power of the devil," but is

* Dr. Luthardt, "Saving Truths," p. 240.

already the subject of saving grace, and in a passive state, why should not baptism impart additional grace to it? It is a perfect being; it possesses receptivity; it is susceptible, so that even without baptism it is saved. Being in a saved state, its receptivity is increased thereby. The germinal conditions of faith—belief, confidence, etc.—are present, and make possible a germinal faith even before baptism. We see no reason why such an infant is not the proper subject for prayer, and for dedication to God by baptism. Why, if circumcision, which had a decidedly spiritual significance—for only that was circumcision which was “of the heart, in the spirit, and not of the letter,”—was attended with spiritual benefit, should not baptism also spiritually profit the infant? It is heaven’s appointed means. The infant, which at the outset is capable of becoming a subject of grace, and is capable of receiving additional grace as it develops, as it is presented to Him through God’s appointed means—baptism—why should it not by this means receive special blessing? Why, as Augustine taught, should not the prayers of the parents and of the Church be of profit to it at such a time? It can not be otherwise; baptism is of profit to the infant; grace is conferred.

It must be confessed that all Protestant writers with strong sacramental views do not express themselves as in full sympathy with Dr. Luthardt’s views. Of those who teach that grace is imparted to the infant in baptism, there are two distinct classes:

First—those who teach that saving grace must wait for baptism.

Second—those who teach that saving grace does not wait for baptism, but may come independent of it.

Melanchthon seems to belong to the first class, for in his “Apology to the Augsburg Confession” he teaches that

grace waits for baptism. Tho elsewhere quoted, it will be in place here to reproduce it.

"Now the promises do not apply to these [children], if they be out of the Church of Christ where there is no Gospel nor sacrament. For the kingdom of Christ is only where the Word of God and the sacraments exist. Wherefore it is altogether a Christian and necessary duty to baptize children in order that they may become participants of the Gospel of the promise of salvation, and of grace." *

If we are left to interpret this without any qualification or exception, there is but one construction to be put upon it, that is, that grace must wait for baptism. But if viewed in connection with Lutheran doctrine, and with quotations from various Lutheran writers given in Part I, it can not fairly be interpreted to teach this, since the Lutherans venture to believe that heathen infants may be saved.

There are, however, some hyper-Lutheran, Episcopal, and Reformed theologians who teach that there is no influence of the Holy Spirit except through the power inherent in the Word and sacraments, that His efficacy is inseparable from the Word of which it is an integral part; and being thus immanent, He never operates upon any soul except through and by it. The Holy Spirit is in no case independent of the Word; therefore, in order that infants may become possessors of the grace of the Spirit, they must in some manner first become partakers of the Word. Baptism, which combines the Word with the water, therefore becomes a necessity, as through it alone the grace of the Spirit is conferred upon the infant.

If this be adhered to without exception, then of necessity grace must wait for baptism.

Stier says: "For great and small alike, it [baptism] has

* Apology, Book of Concord, "Baptism."

been ordained by God in His Church, as the way in which the Spirit puts His effect in the Word, as the body and blood of Christ in the Supper; those who are born in Christendom and for Christianity are appointed to this ordinance at once.

"Thus baptism is in the case of children: (1) the preventive, essential *commencement of their regeneration, the implanted germ* of the new life; (2) a firm ground and anchor for their subsequent faith; I have been baptized, the grace of redemption pertains to me."*

Yet in another place this same author says distinctly: "The want of baptism on the part of little children does not condemn them. The opinions as to the perdition of unbaptized children, which once were current but are scarcely to be found now in evangelical churches, spring from the utmost confusion and misapprehension of all that belongs to the question."† He says "only unbelief condemns." The infant is not an unbeliever, therefore is not condemned. He advocates probation after death for all who had no opportunity to believe. This is the refuge of many who advocate baptismal regeneration. They seek in this way to escape the logical conclusion of this dogma. Their better nature revolts at the suggestion of infant damnation, and, therefore, they assume probation after death. No Protestant theologians have taken the positive stand which the Roman and Greek Churches have upon the doctrine that grace must wait for baptism. While some of them apparently sanction it, they do not accept the only logical conclusion of it, which is, that all infants who fail of Baptism are necessarily lost. But instead of this, Protestant writers who seem to entertain a similar view respecting baptism and grace express doubt concerning the damnation of infants.

Dr. Krauth says: "On the question whether the infants

* "Words of Jesus," vol. iii., p. 832.

† *Idem*, p. 831.

of heathen nations are lost, most of our theologians *prefer to suspend their judgment.*"*

Dr. Krauth also quotes Fuerlin, who says: "In regard to the infants of unbelievers, we are either to suspend our judgment, or adopt the milder opinion in view of the universality of the grace of Christ; which can be applied to them by some extraordinary mode of regeneration "

"Hunnius says: ' I would not dare to affirm that pagan infants, outside of the Church, without distinction are lost. . . . We commit them to the decision of God.'

"Cotta takes a most hopeful view of their case."†

While some of these writers apparently accept the view that grace waits for baptism, they shrink from its logical consequence, the damnation of the unbaptized infants. The fate of these they leave in doubt, but at the same time prefer to teach that there is "some other way," some extraordinary mode of regeneration, when the death of the infant makes it necessary.

If there is some other way, then the doctrine that grace waits for baptism is not sound, but is radically defective. It can not be reconciled either with such passages as this, "Where sin abounded, grace did much more abound," nor with such facts as a universal atonement and the passive state of the infant, and its capacity to receive before it can accept or reject. Nor does it agree with Christ's taking children and blessing them, and saying, "Of such is the kingdom of heaven."

Let us not forget that very few Protestant writers have taught the damnation of unbaptized infants; some of them hold an agnostic view, but even that with a decided leaning toward infant salvation; therefore the logical conclusion of it is, that they do not teach that grace waits for baptism,

* Krauth, in *Evangelical Review*, 1866, p. 358.

† *Idem*, p. 358.

tho some of their statements might be construed to imply as much. The theory in hand does not make baptism absolutely necessary for the infant, but at the same time it is in harmony with the belief that grace is imparted in baptism. Indeed, it makes this latter more plausible, because it teaches that the infant is, before its baptism, a passive subject of grace, so that there need be no hesitation in believing that at its baptism additional grace may be bestowed; that it is, therefore, a loss to the infants not to be baptized. This loss, however, does not in any wise imperil its soul in case it dies.

While grace need not wait for baptism, yet the infant will receive a degree of it through baptism that it can not receive without.

But saving grace waits for nothing but passivity. This is the infant's birthright, and the infant has it without the use of any of the means of grace.

There are passages from the epistles (Rom. vi: 3, 4, 5; Titus iii: 5; 1 Peter iii: 21) which have been interpreted as teaching that baptism arbitrarily regenerates *ex opere operato*. So the Church of Rome teaches, but no Protestant believes it. Adult candidates for this sacrament are in these verses assumed to have repented and to possess faith. Only such can be said to be "buried with Christ into his death," or to be "risen with him through the faith of the operation of God." Baptism confirms the faith of such and strengthens it, but does not generate it arbitrarily.

No Protestant believes that baptism can, *ex opere operato*, generate faith or penitence in the impenitent; to all such it remains ineffectual so long as their impenitence lasts. Baptism is not the initiatory step for even the adult, who has wilful sin, but penitence is; that makes faith possible. If the soul that possesses this penitence and faith should die before it could be baptized, it would be saved, as the

penitent thief was. Penitence and faith would, in such cases, be sufficient for adults. We are not, therefore, to interpret those passages of Scripture just cited as teaching that baptism could arbitrarily regenerate, or that grace must wait for it in the case of the adult. Where such have possessed penitence and faith, baptismal grace is supplementary, rather than initiatory or introductory.

The primitive Fathers were disposed to believe that the highest importance should be attached to baptism, because in his conversation with Nicodemus Christ gave baptism this prominence when He placed it first in that passage: "Except a man be born of water," etc. Many others have from this passage also inferred that baptism must be the initial step to the new-birth, that grace must wait for it. If the position of the phrase "born of water" in this passage entitles it to this significance, then we must expect to find baptism itself enjoined as the first step in all other passages which involve the new-birth; but this is by no means the case. For instance, in the great commission, "Go ye, therefore, and teach all nations, baptizing them," etc., the "baptizing" follows the "teaching." Mark also makes it follow believing: "He that *believeth* and is baptized," etc. (Mark xvi: 16).

One must conclude, therefore, that no weight can be attached to the position of the phrase "born of water" in the Savior's conversation with Nicodemus. It would be a mistake to conclude from this passage alone that grace must wait for baptism. In addition to this, it is worthy of note that in those instances in which adult baptisms are recorded in the New Testament, uniformly the sacrament was administered to the subjects after they had either repented and believed, or after the Holy Ghost had fallen upon them.

When at Pentecost the convicted ones asked, "Men and

brethren, what shall we do?" "Peter said unto them, Repent, and be baptized," etc.

It was after the Samaritans believed Philip's "preaching the things concerning the kingdom of God and the name of Jesus Christ," that they were baptized (Acts viii: 12-17).

After the eunuch believed, Philip baptized him.

After Saul of Tarsus had received his sight he was baptized (Acts ix: 18).

At Cæsarea, it was after the Holy Ghost fell on them that Peter commanded them to be baptized (Acts x: 48).

On the other hand, the Holy Ghost was not received by the Samaritans even after they believed and were baptized by Philip, until the apostles Peter and John could come from Jerusalem and lay hands upon them (Acts viii: 12-17). The same also was true of John's disciples who were re-baptized in Ephesus, but it was not until Paul laid his hands upon them that they received the Holy Ghost (Acts xix: 1-6).

Lydia's heart was opened by the Lord before she was baptized (Acts xvi: 15).

Crispus and "many of the Corinthians" believed first and were afterward baptized (Acts xviii: 8).

If this practise of the apostles establishes anything, it is this: baptism is necessary in some sense, but grace need not wait for it in the case of adults, since they either believed or the Holy Ghost came upon them in most cases before they were baptized, and in several not until the laying on of hands. If grace came upon adults because they believed and before they were baptized, there is nothing to prevent its coming upon infants, since they need not believe, because they are passive without it.

CHAPTER XXX

OBSERVATIONS: FIRST, IF GRACE MUST WAIT FOR BAPTISM, THEN AS A CONSEQUENCE ALL UNBAPTIZED INFANTS THAT DIE ARE LOST—SECOND, IT IS NOT REASONABLE THAT GRACE, WHICH IS FREE AND ABUNDANT, SHOULD BE CIRCUMSCRIBED BY A MEANS OF GRACE SO LIMITED AS BAPTISM—THIRD, THE THEORY THAT GRACE DOES NOT WAIT FOR BAPTISM AFFORDS THE ONLY BASIS FOR A FIRM BELIEF IN THE SALVATION OF ALL DEAD INFANTS

SEVERAL observations will be in place in addition to what has been written upon this relation of grace to baptism:

First Observation.—If grace is dependent upon baptism for its saving efficacy, then necessarily all unbaptized infants are in a lost condition. Tho redemption has annulled original sin, that is not enough to insure salvation; the grace of the Holy Spirit must make them partakers of Christ's life before they can be saved; innocence alone is not a saved state. Grace must be given, but if it must wait for baptism, then all unbaptized infants are in an unsaved state, and those who believe that dogma, to be consistent, must believe that all unbaptized infants that die are damned. In the case of the adult, belief may take the place of baptism, as Augustine said was the case with the dying thief; but the unbaptized infant is at death left in a hopeless condition. Because, forsooth, the little helpless one, through no fault of its own, failed of baptism,

it must die and be lost. One is not surprised that those who profess to believe this doctrine do not preach it.

Second Observation.—It is not reasonable to suppose that grace, which is free and for all, should be circumscribed by so limited a means as baptism. This renders that freedom to a great extent nugatory. The apostle, in Rom. v: 20, tells us that grace is much more abounding than sin; but if it must await baptism, then sin has the advantage, decidedly so. We will have to paraphrase that verse to read, “Where grace abounded, *sin* did much more abound,” because sin is in all, while grace is possessed by the baptized only, a limited number.

Also in the eighteenth and nineteenth verses of this same chapter, the apostle would have us infer that this grace is to be in some sense extended to all. “Therefore as by the offense of one, judgment came upon all to condemnation,” “even so by the righteousness of one, the free gift came upon *all men*, unto justification of life.” The apostle would have us infer that at some time in life this “free gift” removes the general condemnation and effects the justification of all.

This eighteenth verse is immediately connected with the twelfth verse of the same chapter, the intervening ones being in parentheses. Therefore fully to understand the force of the latter half of the eighteenth, it must be brought in direct connection with the twelfth, then it reads as follows: “Wherefore as by one man sin entered into the world, and death by sin; and so death passed upon all men, for that all have sinned; even so by the righteousness of one, the free gift came upon all men unto justification of life.” The “free gift” is coextensive with the “death that passed upon all men,” and besides, this “free gift came upon all men *unto the justification of life.*”

It is this “death” or “judgment” that “passed upon

all," and nothing less, that is now entirely removed by the "justification of life," since it also "came upon all." It is therefore nothing less than a full, complete justification secured for all, and at some time in life it comes upon all; that time is no doubt in infancy, while the child is in a passive state and has no actual sin. It could not be at any later period.

Dr. Charles Hodge says, respecting these verses—Rom. v: 18, 19: "We have no right to put any limit on these general terms, except what the Bible itself places upon them. The Scriptures nowhere exclude any class of infants—baptized or unbaptized, born in Christian or in heathen lands, of believing or unbelieving parents—from the benefits of the redemption of Christ." As elsewhere quoted, he says: "We believe that the grace which is in Christ Jesus secures the salvation of all who have no personal sins to answer for." *

In the parenthetical verses of this chapter (thirteenth and seventeenth) the apostle is very careful to assure us that the free gift by grace is "*much more*" effective and abounding to save than the offense and fall of Adam is to destroy. He uses this "*much more*," referring to the superiority of grace, three times in this chapter: "*Much more* being reconciled, we shall be saved by his life" (ninth verse). "*Much more* the grace of God, and the gift of grace, hath abounded unto many" (fifteenth verse). "*Much more* they which receive abundance of grace, shall reign in life, by Jesus Christ" (seventeenth verse). "*Much more* than this death by sin reigns."

Respecting these verses Dr. Hodge says: "It is therefore contrary to the whole spirit of the passage (Rom. v: 12-21) to exclude infants from 'the all' who are made alive in Christ."

* "Systematic Theology," p. 299.

It may be safely added that these words are intended to convey to our minds, respecting infants, the same meaning conveyed by the Savior's words: "Of such is the kingdom of heaven." Also that to all mankind, this free gift is in infancy made available.

It is not therefore reasonable that grace, which is free for all, must be circumscribed by baptism, so that only the baptized can receive it. Neither is it reasonable to believe that since the infant has receptivity before it can either accept or reject, and being in a state of susceptible passivity which is of itself specially receptive of grace, it would still be necessary for grace to wait for baptism.

This receptive condition should certainly welcome grace, especially since grace abounds much more than sin, and is a "free gift" withal. The language of Paul in Rom. v. is without significance, if it be true that, after all, this grace is confined absolutely to baptism for its initiatory work in the infant soul. We say for its initiatory work; for bear in mind that it is not claimed that the saving grace received by the unbaptized infant is complete in itself, except that it saves. It is sufficient to impart the renewing life of Christ and sufficient for the beginning of spiritual life. Baptism and the prayers of the Church without doubt impart additional grace, but this saving grace is so "much more abounding" than the destroying power of sin that it need not wait for baptism in order to obtain admission into the infant's passive soul.

It is not safe to claim a full regeneration for even infant baptism, since that must doubtless be preceded by true penitence and sound conversion in the adult. The infant's nature is germinal simply, not in any wise active, responsible, mature.

Stier admits this; he says: "Indeed, full regeneration can not be predicated by any means of infant baptism; not

indeed to any such extent as it may coincide in the case of adults with the reception of the water." He means that infants can not repent or be converted as the adult can before being fully regenerated.

So it is not claimed that the saving grace imparted to infants is full, complete regeneration, but that it is a living principle, in full possession of the infant; that, so long as the infant is in an irresponsible state, it is capable of maintaining that possession against the encroachments of evil; and that grace has access to the germs of that spiritual nature, and quickens them, just as the warmth and moisture of the soil vitalize and develop the germ in the seed. Such is the vital energy of redemption that it has overcome the deadening destructive power of original sin; and has actually made it possible for the infant soul to come into contact with saving grace—so abounding is it—even without the use of baptism.

Third Observation.—This theory, that grace need not wait for baptism because of the passive condition of the infant and the "much more" abounding nature of grace than of sin, affords the only basis upon which to fix a firm belief in the salvation of all dead infants.

Those who teach that baptism precedes grace must teach that all infants that die unbaptized are lost, for to fall back upon the agnostic position discredits their theory. Also those who simply assert that dead infants are saved because of the atonement of Christ, still leave the question in an unsettled state. How does the Atonement reach them? Until this is explained satisfactorily, it amounts to nothing more than an assumption. If it is not proven that the natural condition of the infant, despite its depravity, is such that the Holy Spirit may without the means do its regenerating work, then all is simply assumption.

And now the bold claim is made that the view here ad-

vocated affords the only basis upon which to rest a sound belief in the salvation of all dead infants.

Neither of the other positions, with the antipedobaptist included, will stand the test of criticism or of Scripture. Each is too speculative to deserve a place in a science like theology. They are better calculated to awaken than to destroy doubt.

Fourth Observation.—All theories which seek to account for the salvation of only those children that die must be radically defective.

Infants that survive are left out of the account. They certainly have as much claim upon atoning mercy as those that die; besides, if the aim be to vindicate God's justice, then it is also as necessary to provide saving grace for the living as for the dead infant, and the atonement, to be universal, must from its very nature provide as fully for those that live as for those that die.

Any theory of infant salvation which does not place all infants upon the same plane with grace, and make the atonement equally effective for the living as the dying, will prove unsatisfactory; it must fail to stand the test of criticism. One is not surprised to find that from unsatisfactory theories others have sprung which eminent theologians have adopted and advocated in their desire to save all infants. One of these obtained prominence in Origen's day. It has been revived in recent years, and has a number of eminent advocates at the present time; it is the theory of probation after death.

CHAPTER XXXI

PROBATION AFTER DEATH — A DOCTRINE WHICH OWES ITS ORIGIN CHIEFLY TO THE DOCTRINE OF BAPTISMAL REGENERATION AND TO OTHER WRONG VIEWS OF INFANT SALVATION

IF old theories must be adhered to, we may expect that the doctrine of probation after death will find many advocates, who, because they can not reconcile their theories with the justice and mercy of God, will hold that natural death is not the final or decisive event which determines the eternal condition of the soul. As a result, the state after death and until the judgment is claimed to be one that, even 'more than the state before death, admits of repentance and faith, since the Redeemer is still on His mediatorial throne. This doctrine teaches that the dead infant enters its second existence at death, and there grows and develops as while on earth; that it potentially unites soul and body; and both advance toward physical and moral maturity. It is not in the power of death to annihilate the law of human development; the infant continues to be as truly human in the next life as in this. The broad claim is made that "this principle is presupposed by all theological discussions respecting the future state of infants."*

If this hypothesis would include none but infants, the danger of it would not be so great; but when you have once opened this question, it is sure to lead to much greater length. Therefore some include with infants all the

* Prof. E. V. Gerhart, Reformed Review, "Infant Salvation,"

heathen; others, all the unsaved who had no opportunity to hear and believe. Even the doctrines of final restoration and universal salvation are predicated upon it. A doctrine which teaches the damnation of unbaptized infants that die, or even entertains a doubt as to their salvation, is sure to encourage the belief that an opportunity will be afforded them beyond the grave. From this it is but a step to the belief that all the heathen will also have the same privilege. It is but another step and you include all those in Christian lands who, from untoward circumstances or unfavorable conditions, died unsaved. So step by step you advance until all the unregenerated dead are included, except such as have blasphemed against the Holy Ghost, "who have never forgiveness." Indeed Universalism even includes these also. Doctrines so purely speculative as this one of probation after death will not cease their development until they have reached their utmost limit. Their advocates, after having taken the first step, have prepared themselves or their disciples for the second, and by this for the third, and so to the end, so that what may be comparatively harmless at first has become dangerous and destructive in the end.

It must have been so with this particular doctrine. It was first broached by the Christian teachers of the Alexandrine school, Clement and Origen at its head. Out of it has grown the Catholic doctrine of Purgatory, which survives to this day. Other phases of belief besides this one have found favor also for a time, and finally universal salvation was proclaimed. Origen's doctrine was rejected by the fourth council of Carthage in 398 A.D., and afterward by many other councils. The Augsburg Confession condemns it, and so do Calvinism and Arminianism.

However, such condemnation avails but little unless with it there is found some way to solve the problem of infant

salvation. If old theories and dogmas are calculated to spring the objections which give rise to this doctrine of probation, then there is no remedy except some sound and Scriptural view be found which will set these objections aside.

A recent author asserts that "the theory of a probation in the other world for such as have had in this no such probation as to secure from them a decisive choice, has come to us from Germany, and bears accordingly a later Lutheran coloring. Its roots are, however, planted in the earliest Lutheran thinking." *

It can not with justice be said that this doctrine, which is as old as the second century, has come to us from Germany, nor that the agnostic character of much Lutheran theology on this subject is primarily responsible for it. But this is true: that any system, be it Lutheran, or Reformed, or Arminian, which leaves in doubt the salvation of unbaptized infants that die, will encourage the belief in a probation after death. It is also true that a doubtful or agnostic position is better calculated to foster this belief than one that even teaches positively that all unbaptized infants are lost after death; for is it not true that such a theology as the Catholic has had less difficulty with this subject than the Protestant? Do we not find such writers as Stier, Alford, Farrar, and more recently Dr. Kedney, Prof. E. V. Gerhart, including some Lutheran, Presbyterian, and many Congregational and Baptist divines (all Protestants), agitators of this doctrine of probation after death? An agnostic position upon a subject of such keen and vital interest as this one naturally awakens inquiry and investigation.

The human mind is more excited and restless in a state of doubt and uncertainty than when doubt is not encouraged or entertained. Even if a doctrine is severe, if it be

* Dr. Warfield, "Infant Salvation," p. 55.

positive, then because there is so much room on the divine side to encourage hope, we are content to leave that objectionable feature in the Lord's hand; but when the statement of the doctrine is such as to leave the impression that it is not well founded, or that its advocate is himself so undecided as to commit the decision of the matter to God, then we are confused; doubt arises, we naturally seek a satisfactory solution of the vital question, and in our search for it are very apt, when infants are involved, to conclude that there is no other solution besides that afforded by the theory of future probation. This will give the infant all the opportunity necessary in the next world to enable it to decide for itself, to exercise its own will, and to accept or reject, as it may choose, the terms of salvation.

This doctrine is plausible enough in itself if there were not so many other features associated with it, directly and remotely, which render it unsafe. Not the least of these are its speculative character and its practical tendencies, which have proven themselves dangerous from the day of Origen down. Notwithstanding this, inquiry is awakened, speculation is rife, the doubtful mind seeks rest, and is not apt to cease its inquiry until it finds some spot whereon it can stand—one that is more satisfactory than that of absolute doubt.

In the statement of doctrine upon this particular subject—infant salvation—all systems of Protestant theology are subject to the criticism that they are better calculated to awaken than to allay doubt. This is not more true of the Lutheran than of any other system of theology.

It will be proper to observe in this connection that if "the doctrine of probation after death," as it is called by theologians, is ever to be laid aside, this must in a great measure be done by establishing upon a sound basis the belief that all infants are to be saved after their death.

To do this you must also secure the firm belief that all infants, living or dying, are in a saved state. The Lutheran doctrine of baptismal regeneration; the Presbyterian, that all infants that die are elect and therefore saved; the Baptist, that infants die in a lost state, and are saved upon the first glimpse of the Savior after death; are calculated to encourage the belief in a probationary state after death. Establish the belief that all infants are in a saved state, and probation after death is doomed.

But what of the heathen?

The question, "What is to become of adult heathen after death?" is somewhat allied with this one of infant salvation; but the Savior's language—"He that knew not [his Lord's will] and did commit things worthy of stripes, shall be beaten with few stripes"—clearly indicates that there is at least a small degree of guilt to even a heathen's career of sinfulness, and to this extent he is responsible. Lest it may be said that this passage does not apply to heathen but to "servants," it will be necessary to quote the words of Paul (Rom. ii: 14, 15): "For when the Gentiles which have not the law do by nature the things contained in the law, these having not the law are a law unto themselves." "Which show the work of the law written in their hearts, their conscience also bearing witness, and their thoughts the meanwhile accusing, or else excusing one another." These verses are parenthetical. In the twelfth and sixteenth verses Paul says: "For as many as have sinned without law, shall also *perish* without law . . . in the day when God shall judge the secrets of men by Jesus Christ, according to my gospel."

Clearly there is a measure of guilt which attaches to adult heathen, for "these not having the law [of God] are a law unto themselves." Some of them "do by nature the things contained in the law"; they "show the work of the law

written in their hearts, their conscience also bearing witness." The heathen, therefore, are not without some degree of knowledge, and corresponding responsibility. In Rom. i: 20 the apostle would have us understand that there is a revelation of God's nature, even in the work of creation, to which some degree of responsibility attaches. "For the invisible things of him, from the creation of the world, are clearly seen, being understood by the things that are made, even his eternal power and Godhead; so that they are without excuse."

There is some knowledge of right and wrong in the darkest heathen mind, which, in connection with one's spiritual instincts, makes the adult heathen to that extent responsible to God—"So that they are without excuse." If it can be said that this light of the heathen which springs from nature and conscience leaves them "without excuse," then they are not to be reckoned with in the matter of future probation.

To the extent of the light they have they are responsible, therefore, and will be judged.

This is made more apparent by the fact that heathen are represented in Scripture as becoming hopelessly hardened. It is this class Paul describes in Rom. i: 21-32. They had reached a state of utter wickedness; "God gave them up to uncleanness"; they "changed the truth of God into a lie." "God gave them up to vile affections," . . . "gave them over to a reprobate mind." They were "filled with all unrighteousness," etc., were "without understanding," they "*are worthy of death.*" As heathen they reached this state, so verily there is more responsibility upon the heathen than is generally supposed. If there were none, sin would not debauch them so. A consciousness of wrongdoing must be present; this could not be if they had no light; without it they could not sin. In Ephes. iv: 18,

19 we have another picture of the effects of heathen wickedness: "The understanding darkened." "Past feeling." "Given themselves over to lasciviousness, to work all uncleanness with greediness." This fixed and hopeless state of wickedness is possible only for responsible beings; how then can it be claimed that heathen must have a future probation in order that they may have the Gospel preached to them, when they have hopelessly hardened themselves before they die? What good would the Gospel do such heathen in a future state if it were preached to them? If they die in this hopeless condition they would remain so, since their character is unchangeable.

If to their rejection of this natural light there is added the fact that as infants the heathen are all saved by grace, we need not stumble at the truth that they are "beaten with few stripes." They occupy a very different relation to God than if they had never been subjects of grace. They have some sense of responsibility, know something of duty, and if they ignore all and forfeit the grace of infancy, guilt must follow. Stier teaches positively that the adult heathen will not be condemned until they have an opportunity to believe or to reject the Gospel; this they can not have in this life, therefore they must have it in the next. This conclusion he derives from the words: "He that believeth not shall be damned." He would have us infer that nothing short of the preached Gospel can make one responsible for his believing, and no condemnation can follow until this opportunity is afforded and rejected. He says: "It is incomprehensible that so many fail to perceive this."* This conclusion does not logically follow, because there must be a measure of responsibility attending the exercise of the will of every adult heathen. There is enough of the knowledge of right and wrong to entail some degree

* "Words of Jesus," vol. iii., p. 830.

of guilt if the light enjoyed is ignored. A "few stripes" may be sufficient—all that the necessity of the case will require; but the belief that none will be lost except those who have the Word preached to them is without warrant both in reason and revelation. "The law written in their hearts, their conscience also bearing witness," makes them in a measure responsible. If, therefore, the doctrine of probation after death were applied to the heathen adult alone, it could be set aside with little effort; there is left but little ground for speculation.

But with the salvation of dead infants the case is otherwise; they are the subjects of a soul-destroying depravity, yet are swept from this life before they are even conscious of their own existence. Must they in the next face this same condition with its consequences? Can not the grace of Christ, which is much more abounding than sin, anticipate their departure, except they are first elect or baptized? Yea, more: can that theology be correct which remorselessly binds the infant to some means of grace first, and as remorselessly binds this superabounding grace itself to such means? Can those means of grace, even if enjoyed, bestow a capacity for grace upon the infants that receive them? Is there not something suggestive of magic in a belief which claims that such an infant's will is not coerced if it be baptized, while it would be coerced if grace should undertake to reach it without these means? Is there not magic in such baptism? Can it both "bestow a divine receptivity of grace" and saving grace also? Is it true that passivity is the state this grace seeks, and yet, tho this state is found in the infant, grace can not enter, because the infant is not elect or because baptism has not been administered?

These and many similar questions arise and wait for an answer. If the answer be, "We leave the subject in doubt, we are not prepared to teach, nor do our systems of the-

ology suffer us to teach, that all infants are certainly saved," then we must expect that in this answer the theory of probation after death will find its origin and stronghold.

Before dismissing this "future probation" theory it will not be out of place to offer some objections to the conjecture of a probationary state.

The conditions of the future life are so different from those in this life that its fitness as a probationary state may well be questioned. Is true repentance possible for a disembodied spirit? If man fell in the body and redemption is extended to him in it, is it likely, when out of it—and he will remain out of it until the mediatorial reign of Christ is ended—that he will be in a state adapted to effect this necessary moral change? If the terms of salvation are adapted to fallen man while in the body, can they be adapted to him out of the body? If it became necessary for man's Savior to assume human flesh in order to redeem him in the flesh, is it probable that such redemption will avail for man when out of the flesh? If it was necessary for that Redeemer to come into this world, in this human body, to effect man's redemption while in it, is it probable that it will avail in a very different world for him, under vastly different circumstances and conditions? If the Gospel as a saving means was to be preached in the flesh, and heard or rejected in the flesh, is it probable that this same Gospel will be preached and heard when out of the flesh? Evidently the fleshly body plays a very conspicuous part in the divine plan of redemption, and when this fact is taken in connection with other Scriptural proof, an unwarranted stretch of credulity is required even to hope that probation after death is possible. The lost soul is not only out of the body, but also out of a world where sin exists, and in one where external temptation has ceased; where also, so far as

is taught, the Holy Spirit is not present to move to repentance.

Martensen says: "The possibility of conversion depends . . . on the fact that internal and external conditions of effectiveness for the development of this possibility are present, that the sinner is still in that order of things which bears in itself the stamp of that which is undecided—a state of the world where trial and temptation may still be talked of."*

If the disembodied spirit can repent, why may we not rationally expect that the angels which kept not their first estate will also be finally restored? Why should they not have a part with fallen man? Both are consigned to the same place—Matt. xxv: 4. The fallen angels have not been finally judged and sentenced; yet there is no word of Scripture favorable to them; instead, the Bible dooms them forever. They have been "delivered into chains of darkness, to be reserved unto judgment" (2 Peter ii: 4).

Jude says: "And the angels which kept not their first estate, . . . he hath reserved in everlasting chains under darkness, unto the judgment of the great day." Verily that state affords little hope for those who enter it. The little hope which some receive from 1 Peter iii: 19, 20; iv: 6, is too small upon which to base so grave a doctrine as that of restoration.

The whole tenor of the Bible is against it. The Atonement and revelation were made in this world, and their commands and promises and conditions are all given as if intended only for the present life. The warnings, entreaties, threatenings, and promises are all aimed at this present life. Is all this a delusion? It certainly is, if there is yet another state, that of probation. It may well be asked, Could a revelation of God's will to man afford to

* "Dogmatik," sec. 286.

conceal so momentous a truth from him? If it be a truth, would it not be withholding that which should be known? Would it be consistent to tell His creature that there is an eternity of blessedness or wo, and yet keep back so important a truth as this? Is not all truth valuable? Would it not, therefore, be a grievous wrong to withhold it? God seeks to accomplish His purposes through the truth, and not by concealing any part of it. If, therefore, future probation or final restoration be true, this would be revealed. Otherwise, holders of the theory practically charge God with concealing that which should be made known.

Furthermore, the great importance of such a truth should give it a prominence which would have placed its revelation beyond a peradventure.

What, then, are we to conclude when we find instead that the terms of salvation and the promises of it all end with the present existence? Also that when the future life is referred to, it is in such language as precludes the hope of future probation? In addition to this the Scriptures teach repeatedly that the sufferings of the wicked are coeval and coeternal with the happiness of the righteous. Also we read, God's "throne is forever and ever" (Heb. i:8). God "who liveth forever and ever" (Rev. iv:9, 10; v:14; x:6, and xv:7). Christ's "reign" shall be "forever and ever." So the punishment of the wicked shall be "forever and ever" (Rev. xiv:11; xix:3; and xx:10). Coeternal with God's throne, and therefore God's own existence. This should set all doubt aside.

The duration of hell, therefore, is also coeval with that of heaven. The rich man made no request for his own restoration, as tho he was fully conscious of the fact that his state is hopeless; and Abraham's declaration, "There is a great gulf fixed," confirms this. In fact, the whole tenor

of the Bible is such as to preclude the hope of future probation.

In view of this, Delitzsch says: "There is no doctrine that contradicts the Holy Scripture in a more unwarrantable manner than that of the so-called apocatastasis [restoration]." *

If we are satisfied that the theory of future probation is unscriptural and unsound, and still hold to the theory of baptismal regeneration, we must then preach infant damnation, because it is impossible to retain both baptismal regeneration and the other theories by which infants that die unbaptized will be saved. These latter must be surrendered if baptismal regeneration stands. We can not save this doctrine and the unbaptized infant also.

It is clear that theologians, such as Quistorpius, Calovius, Fechter, Zeibichius, and Buddeus, who held that all unbaptized infants of unbelievers and heathen were lost, are more logical and consistent than those who teach baptismal regeneration and yet believe that all unbaptized infants will either be saved or enter another probationary state after death. To cling tenaciously to a doctrine and yet practically repudiate it by exceptions and evasions in order to escape its severity, is manifestly not the way to remove the difficulty. The remedy does not reach the seat of the disease, and to leave that untouched nothing is gained. Let the diagnosis be made first, and the seat of the difficulty discovered; let baptismal regeneration be subjected to a careful examination, and if the cause of all the trouble lies in that, let the remedy be applied there. If, on the other hand, it be found that this doctrine is sound, then let it remain so; defend it, proclaim it as a great fundamental doctrine should be defended and proclaimed. Let it majestically sweep all usurpers from its rightful realm and

* "Biblical Psychology," p. 552.

reign without a rival. If the water and the Word must both be employed before the regenerating power of the Holy Spirit can be secured, then the doctrine of baptismal regeneration must stand, tho the consequences be severe. Let infant damnation be proclaimed from the house-tops. Away with the "some other way," the "extraordinary way," "the absolute and ordinary necessity," etc. Out with them; they are miserable, rationalistic pretenders. There is no hope for the unbaptized infant that dies. Only those are loyal who accept baptismal regeneration in this light, and who will defend it in all its rights and privileges.

If, however, the love and mercy of God are seriously bedimmed, and on their account you are disposed to seek for a way of escape from this severity, be assured you will find it at the loss of the doctrine of baptismal regeneration. You may still call the doctrine by that name, but it is a misnomer; another has usurped its throne. Pity for the infant and regard for God's mercy have sacrificed the doctrine to secure a place for themselves.

Failing by exceptions to save a favorite doctrine from the reproach of infant damnation, you must next fly to probation after death; there is no doubt but that by this means the prime objection to it will have been removed. Another point will also be gained—the justice and mercy of God will be vindicated. If all ended here it would be well, but what you have gained is more than counterbalanced by the loss sustained; a doctrine is accepted which is without Scriptural authority. It makes possible the Catholic one of purgatory, and even restoration as held by Universalists. The doctrine of the Atonement is imperiled also. Having done this much, it is an easy matter to hold with Canon Farrar that probation for all the lost, except possibly such as have blasphemed against the Holy Ghost, is also neces-

sary to vindicate the justice and mercy of God. Speculation is thereby turned loose and is all agog, and now "fools rush in where angels fear to tread." We have saved baptismal regeneration, it is true; but to do it, "we have sown the wind and we shall reap the whirlwind."

If the doctrine of baptismal regeneration were necessary to vindicate God's mercy and justice, or even to preserve the integrity of baptism as a sacrament, there would be at least a show of reason in it, but it is not necessary for either of these. It is by no means necessary to dethrone one in order to crown the other, not even to humiliate one in order to dignify the other. Such glory, if secured, must be short-lived.

CHAPTER XXXII

EMERGENCY THEORIES UNSOUND

WHAT may justly be termed emergency theories are also among those erroneous conceptions which originate from wrong views of infant salvation.

Those theologians whose systems of doctrine leave in doubt the salvation of all unbaptized infants that die have sought in various ways to find some ground upon which they might establish a plausible theory by which all doubt would be removed and the salvation of unbaptized infants secured. In their attempts they have not sought to establish the doctrine that all infants are subjects of saving grace, but have tried to rescue only those that died, leaving all the survivors out of consideration. In the very nature of the plan of salvation this must cast suspicion upon their attempt. Redemption and its aims must not be construed to favor a certain class of infants simply because such an emergency as death is supposed to require it. Such a theory is unsound. A great general scheme like redemption must not be supposed to provide for special emergencies, not even for such an one as death. There is provided salvation for every one. That is sufficient for all infants, living or dead. All that is required to make this salvation possible is simply the passive state; this the infant possesses in common with the adult. Natural depravity does not rob the infant of it. If the adult can be passive in spite of depravity, so can the infant. This passivity

in the infant makes it the receptive subject of the Holy Spirit, it having receptivity before it can actively accept or reject. The infant, also being a complete individual, possessed of body, soul, and spirit, has all the elements of a human being. Tho these elements are in embryo, they nevertheless have this receptivity with the ability to develop; therefore an embryonic faith is possible for them. In short, they are not spiritual imbeciles, but possess the capacity to receive saving grace. It is by no means certain that those few examples given in Scripture are sporadic cases, but it is more likely that these were chosen out of countless hosts of others only to answer the purposes of the inspired record.

These facts make it possible for all infants to become the subjects of saving grace. That grace being much more abounding than sin enables us to conclude, concerning all infants, that "of such is the kingdom of heaven."

There is therefore no need of an emergency theory, which in case of death must be ready to step in and rescue the unbaptized infant, and also vindicate the character of God from the charge of cruelty and injustice.

These different theories have been pointed out, as occasion required, in the historical review of this doctrine of infant salvation; it will not therefore be necessary much more than to refer to them here.

1. *The Lutheran*.—This presumes that God has "some extraordinary way" by which to reach unbaptized infants that die, so that none are lost. This presupposes that there is grace provided for the emergency—death. Cotta, Krauth, and others felt assured that there was such grace. The latter says: "When . . . these precious little ones are cut off from the reception of His grace by its ordinary channel [baptism], our church still cherishes the most blessed assurance . . . that in some *other way* God's wis-

dom and tenderness will reach and redeem them.”* This is the emergency theory held not simply in hope, but in “blessed assurance.” This “blessed assurance” is simply assumption, and therefore unwarranted.

2. *The Calvinistic*.—The latest development of Calvinism, which teaches that “all dead infants are elect,” is one which originated in the common humane desire to save the dead infant; also to preserve from insult the belief that God is merciful. It is, however, an emergency theory pure and simple; for in its desire to save infants that have died it overlooks all those who survive. This does not vindicate God’s mercy. Any theory which provides grace for infants simply because they die is purely an emergency theory, and is also presumptuous and unwarranted.

3. *The Methodist Episcopal*.—This doctrine, as explained by Dr. Whedon, is the same in kind. He says: “That the dying infant is saved, and saved by the Atonement we all agree; while a living infant seems to be a somewhat undecided matter. Probably a large majority of the Methodist Episcopal Church have for some time past held without much discussion that the living infant was both unjustified and unregenerate, and yet upon his death he obtained both blessings.” Nothing could set forth an emergency theory more plainly than this. It is not, however, positive; his statement of it is doubtful and equivocal in character. But if held by “a large majority,” it is nevertheless of that same objectionable character.

4. *The Baptist*.—We have no better example of an emergency theory than that furnished us by Dr. Strong of the Baptist Church. It is that the infant is a spiritual imbecile, entirely impotent in this life, but not so if it dies. Death will instantly free it from its imbecility, and endow it with a susceptibility that will either save it outright or

* Evangelical Review, 1866, p. 349.

at least enable it to obtain "a glimpse of the Savior" after death, and thereby be saved. This is the emergency theory in perfection. The emergency of death is necessary to throw off this imbecility and endow the infant with the required potency. The very body, made to be "the temple of the Holy Ghost," must die first before He can save the soul! Strange that such a theory could find a place in theology.

This emergency theory obtains in other Protestant churches. Enough has been written to show what is meant by this emergency theory, and therefore it is unnecessary to cite other examples.

It is evident that these theories are too speculative and unsound to commend themselves upon their own merits. The fact that theologians have felt themselves driven by their systems into straits requiring doctrines that betray so much human invention as this, proves that in their efforts to save their systems from reproach, and to satisfy their own sense of divine justice and mercy, it was necessary to resort to weak and illogical expedients. Without some such expedient each of these theological systems must leave many infants to die and be lost. They also throw a dense shadow over the mercy of God. Hence these emergency theories. But the weakness of the attempt to escape these logical consequences is so apparent, and the unsoundness of the theories themselves so glaring, that it is surprising that they ever obtained the consideration which they have. This at least should have suggested that the remedy must be found in the capacity of all infants for saving grace, whether they live or die, whether they are baptized or not. The passive condition of all infants and the receptive character of that passivity, regardless of the infant's power actively to believe, is the only sound Scriptural basis for the salvation of infants.

This theory fully vindicates the divine mercy, because it saves not only the dead infant, but the living as well. It does not make saving grace depend absolutely upon the means of grace, nor yet upon a mere contingency like death, but upon the passive state of the infant and the superabounding grace of God.

This theory also fully vindicates the scheme of redemption; since redemption was not only intended for all, but actually reaches all, and secures for all the estate we lost. In other words, during the early period of our existence, the Savior secures for His lost race a complete redemption. He not only died for all, but His death avails for all; it effectually saves them. It is all-sufficient to cancel the sin of depravity which is the effect of the fall, and to endow with saving grace every lost soul that cometh into the world. This grace, in case of death, secures for the little one a happy admission into paradise; and at the same time implants in the living infant a spiritual germ that, if carefully nurtured, will in God's good time develop into a vigorous, fruit-bearing vine in the vineyard of the Lord.

If we wish to vindicate the divine mercy, let us not seek to do it by the presumptuous patchwork process of an emergency theory, but by a consistent Scriptural one, which will save not only the infant that dies, but the living infant as well. Let the Savior be indeed as John teaches, "The true light which lighteth *every man* that cometh into the world"; or as Paul, "The free gift," which "came upon *all men unto justification of life.*" "That as sin hath reigned unto death, even so might grace reign through righteousness, unto eternal life, by Jesus Christ our Lord." Away with emergency theories!

CHAPTER XXXIII

MAGICAL NOTIONS RESPECTING BAPTISM, GRACE, ETC., ENCOURAGED BY WRONG VIEWS OF INFANT SALVATION

BELIEF in magic has prevailed in all ages and among all classes and races of mankind. It springs readily from the mind when it is baffled in its attempts to trace effects to causes which are too subtle for it to grasp, and to which the mysterious attaches. Neither science nor revelation affords the needed light. In its failure to discover these causes, credulity is apt to fly to magic for relief. Witchcraft, necromancy, sorcery, enchantment, conjury, and even the modern belief in mascots, are some of the grosser outcroppings of it. Preternatural agencies are believed to be the sources to which we must look for such causes.

The mysteries of religion furnish a fruitful field for such magical belief. Science alone is its hostile foe. Art is not a stranger to it. We read of it when Moses and Aaron in the presence of Pharaoh (Exod. vii: 10) were withstood by Jannes and Jambres, magicians.

Balaam, the son of Beor, for whom Balak sent to curse Israel, is in Joshua called a soothsayer, and was believed to have possessed the powers of divination.

At so early a period as the marriage of Jacob and Rachel it took root in Israel; and Rachel is responsible for its introduction apparently. She carried away the teraphim from Laban (Gen. xxxi: 19, 30, 32-35), and so carefully were they secreted by her that her father's search through Jacob's tent failed to discover them. This belief in magic

must have existed in Padan-Aram, therefore, along with the worship of the true God; and from thence it found its way to Canaan. It must have followed Israel into Egypt, and survived the period of their bondage there, and returned with them to the Land of Promise; for these same images were afterward made in Mount Ephraim by Micah. The Danites stole them from him, and afterward worshiped them in Laish (Judges xvii. and xviii.).

Ezekiel (xxxi: 19-22) speaks of their divining with teraphim; and Zechariah (x: 2) says: "For the teraphim [see margin] have spoken vanity, and the diviners have seen a lie and have told false dreams," etc.

They were therefore used in a magical sense; and it is supposed they were from time to time the means of corrupting the worship of the true God and inclining Israel to idolatry. It is probable that because of the seductive presence of these teraphim Moses forbade witchcraft, and affixed the penalty of death upon witches.

But so strong was its hold upon the Jews that even Saul their king went to ask the witch at Endor to bring up Samuel to him. Even after the Savior's time, Simon Magus used sorcery and bewitched the people. The damsel who followed Paul was also possessed with a spirit of divination. These attest the fact that this belief in magic still survived in the times of the apostles.

There were special occasions when this magic asserted itself in an extraordinary manner. The first of these was soon after Israel had been smitten before the Philistines; then the Israelites determined to bring the ark of the Lord from Shiloh, supposing that it would save them out of the hand of their enemies (1 Sam. iv: 3).

They attributed to the ark magical power, believing that all that was necessary to secure the defeat of the Philistines was its presence among them.

Apparently all Israel felt that in the ark rested their security, and associated with it magical virtue. This preternatural or supernatural virtue or power would manifest itself if only the ark were brought into the camp of the army; for they said: "Wherefore hath the Lord smitten us to-day before the Philistines? Let us fetch the ark of the covenant of the Lord out of Shiloh unto us, that when it cometh among us *it may save us* out of the hand of our enemies." They were blind to the real cause of their defeat, which was the great and general corruption of religion and morals; for Samuel assured them that if the Israelites "would put away the strange gods and Ashtareth, . . . and serve the Lord only, he would deliver them out of the hand of the Philistines" (vii: 3).

With that blindness and superstition so common with the wicked, they vainly imagined that their security was to be found in the presence of the ark in their camp. It could not exert that magical power if left in Shiloh; no, it must be brought into the camp.

Another and more striking evidence of this belief in the preternatural and magical power of a mere object is that recorded in 2 Kings xviii: 4. The brazen serpent, which healed those who looked upon it, after they were bitten by the fiery serpent in the wilderness, had been preserved until the time of Hezekiah, nearly one thousand years. It had become an object of worship. They attributed to it magical, even spiritual virtue, as is evident from the fact that they burned incense to it. In order to uproot the superstition Hezekiah called it "Nehush-tan" (a brazen thing) and destroyed it. The occasion for its usefulness had long since departed, but as a relic it continued to exist; it also grew in veneration from age to age; all that was needed to exalt it from an object to be looked upon merely to heal the body, to one worthy of

worship, was an age in which the true worship of God should wane sufficiently or cease altogether—an age which would magnify mere forms, introduce relics, and attribute to them certain merit or magical power.

The descent from the true worship to the formal and magical is gradual; the unhallowed object first receives respect, then honor, then admiration and reverence; after that devotion and adoration. It is but an easy descent from one to the other. The imagination generally supplies all the virtues necessary for the object and for the devotee also, so that in due time the descent becomes possible. In this way the grotesque may by age become respected and afterward venerated.

Why be surprised, then, if that which is simply respected at the beginning may come to be revered and worshiped at the last? All idolatry finds its beginning and end in this tendency among men. We may begin with the rational; but with age come newer and stronger views, which, as spirituality relaxes and formality grows, become popular. Images and ideas continue to come in this trend, and the preternatural and the magical are finally reached. We have a case of this kind which will serve to show what an influence merely outward ceremonies will exert in foisting themselves in time upon a people. It was during the Savior's ministry that the traditions of the elders taught that: "He who neglects hand-washing deserves to be punished here and hereafter." "In hand-washing is contained the secret of the ten commandments." "He who eats bread without hand-washing is as if he went in to a harlot." "He who does not wash his hands *after eating* is as bad as a murderer." These were maxims of that day.*

"The same scrupulous, superstitious minuteness extended

* Geikie, "Life of Christ" (Appleton & Co.'s ed.), vol. ii., pp. 202, 203.

to dishes, hollow or flat, of whatever material; knives, tables, and couches were constantly subjected to purifications lest they should have contracted any Levitical defilement by being used by some one unclean."

These practises were based upon the traditions of the elders; these traditions, in this same manner, grew in time to possess more importance than the Scriptures themselves, so that there was magic in these endless washings, and even in tradition itself. The Catholic Church also, by exalting tradition, soon came to reverence the decrees of her councils above the written word. The Pope became infallible. Luther's protest against such of these decrees as antagonized the Word of God was blasphemy and rebellion in Rome's estimation. There was magic in her traditions which like the Ark of the Covenant in time grew to possess a magical virtue. Like the brazen serpent the people must in effect burn incense to these traditions. More reverence was due them than due the Word of God. Luther's declaration, "Unless I am convinced of error by the clear Word of God, I can not and will not retract," was rank heresy because it did violence to Rome's magical traditions. The power of the truth lay in the higher authority of the decrees of her councils; these were magically endowed.

As with this tradition so with the sacraments. The history of baptism in the first and second centuries of the Christian Church is involved in much obscurity; but the fact that in the second the words "regeneration" and "baptism" were interchangeable and synonymous terms affords some proof that already the foundation was laid for that magical effect which baptism soon came to possess in the mind of the Church. Very soon it was taught that even the old prophets could not enter heaven at their death because they had not been baptized; and to deliver their souls it was believed necessary for Christ to descend into Hades

to administer baptism to them. None could be saved without baptism except martyrs. Their own blood shed was sufficient to baptize them. It was even hinted that the dying thief on the cross was baptized by the water as it gushed from the Savior's side, and only thereby was it made possible for him to enter paradise.

The custom of baptizing vicariously a relative or friend for one who had died unbaptized, as was practised by the Corinthians, and after them the Marcionites, and other heretical sects, is another illustration of the extravagant views taught respecting the magical virtue of baptism. The reason assigned for this was that such baptism secured the remission of sins for the deceased in the other world.

A somewhat similar custom prevailed in Africa during the first centuries of the Christian era—that of baptizing the dead who had not been baptized while living. The third council of Carthage speaks of it as a custom of which ignorant Christians were fond; and at the same time the council instructed all not to “believe that the dead can be baptized.”

The response of the sixty-six African bishops, of whom Cyprian was the chief, to the inquiry of Fidus is proof of the extravagant magical virtue attached to baptism at that time. Fidus asked whether it was lawful to baptize an infant before it was eight days old. The response to this inquiry was a letter of considerable length.* It is the whole letter with the circumstances, rather than any part of it, which evinces the extreme views those bishops entertained respecting the virtue of baptism; but the inference is, that without baptism the youngest infant was lost.

Tertullian and Gregory Nazianzen attributed magical virtue to this sacrament. The first taught that baptism was the only means by which the remission of sins could

* Wall, “History of Infant Baptism,” part i., p. 113.

be secured; therefore he advised its delay till just before death. Gregory modified this extreme view somewhat. It was under the influence of this doctrine that the Emperor Constantine purposely deferred his baptism until he came to die. One writer says: "Superstition had by this time taught men to connect by a necessary union the forgiveness of sins with the administration of the rite; and men who desired to continue in sin protracted their baptism to a time when they imagined it might be of the greatest advantage to them."*

There are instances on record where this magical notion was carried to a ridiculous extreme, in regard to both baptism and the Lord's Supper.

Such conceits respecting the virtues of the sacraments are not peculiar to the earlier periods of the Christian Church; but they are publicly taught to-day. The "*ex opere operato*"—a phrase employed by Roman Catholic theologians to describe the manner of the supposed operation of the sacramental rites in the bestowment of grace—is proof of this. They teach that the ministration of the rite by the priest is of itself an efficient cause of grace, so that, when administered to the dying, tho apparently unconscious, such a one may be blessed by it.

The council of Trent decreed that: "If any one shall say that grace, as far as concerneth God's part, is not given through the said sacraments always, and to all men, even tho they lightly receive them, but [only] sometimes, and to some persons, let him be anathema. If any one shall say that by the said sacraments of the new law grace is not conferred through the act performed, but that faith alone in the divine promise suffices for obtaining grace, let him be anathema."†

* Allen, "Church History," vol. i., p. 359.

† Session seventh, canons 7, 8.

This is ascribing a magical effect to the sacraments, and this same effect applies in some degree to all the service and belief of the Romish Church: to its prayers, confessions, and doctrine of infallibility of the Pope; also to its reverence for relics, the bones of the saints, etc.

The active faith of the adult believer is not a necessity. The power of such to appropriate Christ by faith is ignored. The Church, being the dispenser of grace rather than the medium through which it may flow, assumes absolute power to "bind" or "loose" as it decrees.

But we must not think that this view of subtle, magical influence in religion is confined to the Catholic Church; it finds its way into all systems. Even tho a personal faith is the prime, distinguishing feature of Protestantism, and has done much to eliminate this magical feature from religion, yet the latter still lives and exerts itself. A recent author says: "We need no better illustration of the persistency with which the magical element in theology and practical religion has perpetuated itself than the decree of unconditional election. The elect, whether infants dying in infancy or adults, are saved according to the decretal system, by virtue solely of their election; repentance, faith, and obedience being spiritual effects wrought by electing grace."*

The magical effect is wrought by irresistible grace which operates independent of the will or passivity of the subject; nay, even in spite of them. Election has all the arbitrary power over its subject that the sacraments of Rome have over those who are baptized or who receive communion. They and election are superior to the will, or faith, or condition of the subject, and therefore a blessing is bestowed in spite of them.

* Prof. E. V. Gerhart, D.D., *Reformed Quarterly Review*, 1884, p. 31.

A more recent development of this system is that all infants that die are elect or they would not die. In this case the magic of election extends in a singular manner over the infant's death.

Instead of finding the conditions for grace in the passive condition of the infant, this view finds it in election, even an election which favors those that die. To endow election with such supremacy in an emergency is to attribute magical power to it. Indeed, the decretal system may be said to exceed in its magical power the theory of *opus operatum* of the Catholic Church, in so far at least as the bestowment of grace is concerned. The Romanist attaches magical effects to the sacrament of baptism, and in later life to works, prayers, penance, confession, and contrition, irrespective of faith on the part of the subject; but election confers grace irresistibly and independent of baptism, confession, repentance, or faith, or condition of the subject. Election ignores all these. There is more magical power in such election than in the *opus operatum*.

Other systems have found it easy to err on the same line, and have so erred. Extraordinary efficacy is attributed to the sacraments, and even to the Word by some, who teach that the Holy Spirit is unconditionally confined to the Word; that it does not and can not operate separate and apart from it.

On the other hand, there are others who err by attributing too little to the Word and to the sacraments, and too much to the faith of the hearer. Such are the Antipedobaptists.

There are some who go so far as to teach that there is magical virtue in certain "new measures"—the "mourners' bench" for instance; that none are converted except at its sacred shrine. Magic, magic everywhere!

The mystery which beclouds the subject of infant salva-

tion has rendered it especially liable to the ascription of magical influence. This is apparent all along the history of Christian doctrine. We meet it to-day; it is difficult to free the sacraments from the *opus operatum*, even in Protestant churches. This is particularly true of some parents who present their infants for baptism. Tho the *opus operatum* has been repudiated by all Protestants, yet in effect it exists; it is hard to eradicate. Credulity, if not superstition, is at the foundation of it. It is held that there is such magic in baptism that it alone is sufficient for all purposes; it can not only command the spirit, but retain it, irrespective of the faith and diligence of the parent or the passive state of the infant. It wields the magic wand. It can not only create "a divine receptivity of grace," but can fortify that grace, even tho faith be wanting and the careful use of the means of grace be neglected after baptism. Augustine taught that the faith of the parent could avail for the infant at its baptism; this is doubtless true, but how often is that supposed faith nothing more than simple credulity? When baptism possesses a magical power in the parents' mind, it is in fact to all such—Protestant or Catholic—the *opus operatum*. The effect is not produced because the infant is passive, but *ex opere operato*—magic. How much of this same credulity underlay the almost obsolete custom of permitting sponsors to present infants for baptism it would be difficult to say, but a good share of it, beyond a doubt. So with the theory of baptism of intention and in the emergency theories advanced by some Protestants, who hold that, in case baptism has been neglected and the child dies, the Holy Spirit will save it in some other way. The Holy Spirit is not subject to such emergencies; it exerts no such magical power.

The truth is, if we assume that the infant is a stranger to saving grace until it is formally presented to God in bap-

tism, then it is impossible to prevent this credulity in very many instances. There will be magic in the mere formal application of the water by the ordained minister; this is the *opus operatum*.

If, on the other hand, we understand that the infant is already a subject of saving grace, and that baptism is heaven's own ordinance to supplement and strengthen that grace, then this magical feature will be almost entirely or altogether eliminated from infant salvation, where it has found its strongest hold.

Baptism, then, would find a gracious passive state already in the infant, and we would not be left to conjure some mysterious agency in it that would command the presence of the Spirit magically to beget a life which could not begin without baptism.

The elimination of this magical feature respecting infant salvation would conserve the interests of sound faith and also enable parents and the Church better to understand their own responsibility. The mystery which surrounds the introduction of grace into the infant's soul would be cleared away, and the occasion for magical effect would be removed; the parent and the Church would be assured that the coveted life of grace has already begun, and must be fostered according to divine command through baptism and training it in the way it should go. There would be left no room for belief in the magical effect of baptism, if this were properly taught. The parent could not screen himself behind that superstition, but would be made to feel that upon him devolves the responsible task of bringing up his child in the nurture and admonition of the Lord.

CHAPTER XXXIV

REPENTANCE AND CONVERSION NEVER PRECEDE, BUT ALWAYS FOLLOW A STATE OF GRACE IN THE SOUL

It will be observed that if saving grace is possible for the infant, repentance and conversion presuppose this saved state of the infant—in other words, repentance finds its work can properly begin only after grace has first possessed the soul. Repentance and conversion, therefore, are not necessary as preliminary steps to the introduction of grace. Grace always precedes them, because every one coming into the world is saved before repentance and conversion are possible. All those who are now outbreacking and wilful sinners were once subjects of saving grace.

This must be so if our theory is correct. To many in this age of revivals it may seem strange teaching, because such methods presume that repentance and conversion must in all cases prepare the heart for its first reception of saving grace.

The preaching of the present day is almost all in favor of the view that repentance is first necessary before a work of grace can be secured. The belief, based on the assumption that grace has, before repentance was possible, taken possession of its soul, that an infant can be developed into a ripe Christian, is practically repudiated. This is true even of many who teach that baptism confers grace, yet who take no advantage of this fact.

Let us now see how this phase of the subject will adapt itself to the teaching of the different schools of theology.

First—To the Antipedobaptist school it is unscriptural and dangerous. They hold that there can be no saving grace until you are old enough to hear the word and believe; that repentance and conversion must needs precede regeneration.

Second—The Calvinist will find no objection whatever to it, since election and saving grace always precede repentance and conversion in the case of the elect. With this school, repentance and conversion bear no part whatever in preparing the soul for regeneration. They are necessary and possible only after a state of grace is effected in the heart by election, of which they are the fruits.

Calvin remarks, "That repentance not only immediately follows faith, but is produced by it." It therefore can not precede saving faith, and is impossible without it. "It is the fruit, not the source of faith."

He continues: "Those who imagine that repentance rather precedes faith than is produced by it, as fruit by a tree, have never been acquainted with its power, and are induced to adopt that sentiment by a very insufficient argument. There is not the least appearance of reason in the notion of those who, in order to begin with repentance, prescribe to their young converts certain days, during which they must exercise themselves in repentance; after the expiration of which they admit them to the communion of evangelical grace."*

The decretal system of necessity has no place in it for repentance until after saving grace is established in the soul. Repentance is in no sense the parent, but the child of grace; its work is not preparatory to grace, but one that follows, strengthens, and assists grace after it has made repentance possible.

A writer of prominence in the Reformed Church, in ap-

* Per Dr. Apple, "Tercentenary Monument," p. 354.

proving this statement of Calvin's respecting repentance, says: "His definition, too, corresponds entirely with that given in the Heidelberg catechism."*

Nor is this view peculiar to the Calvinistic and other Reformed schools; it is also true of all except the Antipedobaptists, who teach that all infants will be saved after death. The Arminian school in general and the Methodist Episcopal in particular teach that the dead infant is saved by virtue of the Atonement; but how can it be saved except it first become a subject of saving grace? This being so, it becomes such before repentance is possible; therefore saving grace must precede repentance. In other words, the Methodist Episcopal denomination with others must acknowledge that its theory of infant salvation presupposes a state of grace in the infant, and this state of grace is possible without repentance; that it is a necessary consequence.

It is probable that few of the theologians of the Arminian school will be ready to admit that every adult, however abandoned now, was in infancy a subject of saving grace, yet it must be so if the infants that die are saved. If dead infants are in a saved state, so are the living ones. Therefore all who are born into the world are saved before repentance is possible.

Lutheran theologians do not make repentance a prerequisite. Luther taught that grace was bestowed upon infants through baptism, and in some extraordinary manner in case they died without baptism.

The Augsburg Confession says: "Concerning repentance, it is taught that those who have sinned *after baptism* may at all times obtain the forgiveness of sins, if they repent." It is silent concerning repentance on the part of those who have never been baptized.

* "Ter. Mon.," page 354.

Lutheran theology makes repentance a prime necessity for the Christian, because original sin remains after baptism. Melancthon says: "For he [Luther] has ever taught clearly that holy baptism extirpates and removes the entire guilt and hereditary debt of original sin, altho the material of the sin, namely, the evil desire and lust, remains. Original sin is forgiven in baptism, not that it becomes extinct, but that it is not imputed." *

In the Smalcald Articles, Luther says: "And this repentance continues with Christians till death, for it strives with the sins remaining in the flesh during the whole course of life; as Paul (Rom. vii. 23) testifies that he struggles with the law of his members," etc † All those baptized in infancy become subjects of saving grace; therefore repentance to all such must follow after the spiritual life has been begun; it could not precede it. If this grace be lost by wilful sin, then repentance and conversion are both necessary to renew it. If not lost, repentance still is necessary, that it may grow in grace.

It was this phase of repentance and conversion that Spener preached in the stirring revival period in which he lived. He taught that those who repented and gave evidence of a renewed state had previously been saved by baptism; but from this they had fallen by actual sin, and that this present state was the result of a new regeneration. In proof of this, the following will be sufficient:

"While Spener regarded the conversion of Christians who had fallen into spiritual death as a return to baptismal grace, yet he calls such conversion explicitly and emphatically a new regeneration. Inasmuch as the baptismal regeneration [grace] had been entirely lost, and regarding this as the case of the vast majority of those baptized in

* "Apology," p. 63.

† *Idem*, p. 298.

infancy, he treated all who did not exhibit the evidences of spiritual life as not only unconverted, but unregenerate." *

It is clear that, according to Spener, repentance presupposed a previous state of grace in the souls of all baptized in infancy. Repentance could not precede this state in all such souls.

This truth, so far as the writer's observation extends, is not generally inculcated at the present day, but instead, the very opposite: that repentance must necessarily precede saving grace; that the individual, unless penitent, has all his life been a stranger to it; that penitence must prepare the way for the first introduction of grace. Such teaching practically ignores the grace of baptism. It also ignores the fact that all infants are subjects of saving grace.

Without a doubt, this view is contrary to the truth. It conveys to the unsaved a false idea respecting God's relation to the soul; instead of near, He is far off. It tends to discourage multitudes who in childhood loved God, so that they, instead of continuing that love, in ignorance let it perish in their breasts. It holds the sinner also in a wrong light, for instead of teaching him that he was once a child of grace, he is led to believe that he has always been lost. Instead of instructing him to seek by repentance and conversion a renewal of the grace he has lost, he is taught to repent as tho he had never forfeited grace at all, and therefore need not repent of that.

This is all misleading. Under such teaching revival services for the saving of souls are not revivals. Since you must infer that there never was any previous life in the soul to be revived, the term revival as generally employed is a misnomer. So with the terms "born again" and "regeneration." Each of these is used in the sense that the soul is born by repentance for the

* Dr. Sprecher, in *Evangelical Review*, October, 1867.

first time into Christ, yet the real meaning of them is that such soul had been previously born; and having become dead in trespasses and sins, it is born anew when it repents; the lost spiritual life bestowed in infancy is recovered; the soul is born again, regenerated. It was generated, or born into Christ, in infancy; it is regenerated after it has come to the age of responsibility, having lost its original grace by actual transgression. Spener was consistent in teaching that the renewal of spiritual life in those who had fallen into sin after baptism was simply a new generation, a *regeneration*.

The difference between Lutheran theology and the theory that repentance in all cases follows a state of grace, may not be as great as it might at first seem. Lutheran theology teaches that all infants by virtue of baptism become subjects of grace. Of necessity repentance in all such cases must follow a state of grace; it could not precede it. But Lutheran theologians, while they venture to teach that all baptized infants are in a state of grace, do not teach that the unbaptized ones are; these, they believe, continue in sin, except they die. A hope is entertained that the dead are saved without baptism and without repentance.

The view herein advocated is that all infants are subjects of grace, and therefore in all cases repentance follows its work and never precedes it.

CHAPTER XXXV

THE USE AND ABUSE OF REVIVALS

REVIVALS have their place in all successful church work; without them the church will become cold and formal in spirit and worship. The minister should expect the outpouring of the Holy Spirit. He should pray and preach with that end in view. Let the truth be pungently preached both to the saved and the sinner; let the hearts of all be greatly moved. Salvation is the one interest that should throw all others aside as merely secondary. If the heart can be emotional and feel keenly when other interests are in jeopardy, why not so when the immortal soul is in danger of being lost? Let there be earnestness and enthusiasm; these will not harm the church or the world, if judiciously used. We can have them in perfect safety and to our endless profit. Let the burden of souls rest heavily upon the hearts of God's people; it did upon the Savior's, why not upon ours?

If the church be in this state, revivals will come without any other seeking. Let them come; the evil that is feared is not in the revival itself. Yet great harm has arisen from them, not so much because of extravagances, which are the least of injurious results, but because they have been the occasion of keeping before the public erroneous ideas, a few of which will be mentioned:

1. That infants are not subjects of grace, and are not to be dealt with as such, but as necessarily growing up to become sinners; that if they are ever saved, it will be after the

Word is heard, after deep conviction of sin, after repentance, and also after they have come to conscious knowledge of the time and place of their regeneration. This unscriptural and misleading view has become fixed in many communities and churches; it has also greatly disturbed the peace of many who are already devout Christians. It has completely discouraged others who have sought in vain for that extraordinary experience of which they have heard others tell, while it has been the means of deceiving multitudes of others who vainly hoped they had found the experience they sought, but which their early backsliding proved to be a delusion.

2. But the greatest evil of all is that which takes possession of the minds of ministers and parents, namely, that they must regard all children as unsaved, and therefore they are to be looked upon and taught as if they were sinners; that even their baptism has availed them nothing, and was a mere empty form.

3. Preaching of this kind also places God in a false light to the young. He has stood aloof, is angry with them; has left their infancy a blank, and only after they are old enough to understand—after sin has made inroads upon them—does He come to them and demand their repentance and regeneration. It was not possible for them to be His in infancy, nor possible to grow up through childhood as His, but they must be taught that they have always been sinners; that the evil one has had full sway over them, while saving grace was compelled to stand aloof and await a favorable age and opportunity to present itself for their acceptance.

These are the chief errors that our modern revival system, or rather lack of system, has produced, and generations will pass away before they can be counteracted. It will be very difficult to have parents who hold such

views of revivals feel their responsibility, or secure their hearty cooperation in training their children in the way they should go.

Revivals conducted after Spener's method and the views here advocated avoid this. God stands before the sinner as one deserted and forsaken after He in great mercy has bestowed saving grace upon him. The sinner appears in the light of a rebel indeed, who needs not to be born for the first time, but to be born again; not to be generated, but to be regenerated; who in his sin and guilt has forfeited salvation and to obtain it again must repent. In infinite mercy a universal salvation has been effected; a salvation that is able to save not only those who are baptized and those who repent and believe, but all who come into the world—a salvation that will certainly save all infants whether they live or die.

So effective is this salvation that all who finally perish must first lose by their own sin and disobedience the grace it has bestowed upon them.

Divine grace is not compelled to stand aloof and wait for Satan to prepossess and occupy the soul in its earliest and richest years, but takes possession at once and holds sway until, through lack of care, it is banished from the soul.

CHAPTER XXXVI

PRACTICAL LESSONS

A THEORY which teaches that infants are not spiritual imbeciles, but on the other hand that they are subjects of saving grace when born, is of great practical significance. It calls for a readjustment of old methods of dealing with infants, and the adoption of the most practical and effective ones. It demands that the period of early childhood be one of careful nurture. It regards the infant as a perfect human being, possessing all the faculties and powers of such a being, and these powers already in a certain state of activity and development moving along their natural and normal highway toward maturity. Also that they are susceptible of impressions from agencies without, both good and evil.

It presumes that, in the contest for supremacy, the Spirit's agency is not excluded; but that He, finding the passivity in the infant soul all that is required for His admission, enters without coercion, and takes possession; no time is lost. The parent and the church may then be expected to treat the infant as one already saved; and as a subject of saving grace it requires the most careful nurture in order that its spiritual life may safely develop out of infancy into childhood, and from thence to the perfect stature of manhood in Christ Jesus. Very much will be gained when once it is fully understood that the infant is in a saved state. The duties of the pulpit become greater because of it. Ministers will bring this truth to the front and give it the prominence it demands.

With the view that all infants are in a saved state will come a full recognition of the fact that they have the capacity for spiritual life. This recognized, care will be taken to develop the capacity. The significant fact that one of Christ's "little ones" has been committed to the parent will give peculiar emphasis to those passages of Scripture which inculcate this duty: "Train up a child in the way he should go," etc.; "Bring them up in the nurture and admonition of the Lord," etc.; "Suffer little children to come unto me," etc., and kindred texts. The mystery which surrounds such instances of early piety as Samuel and Timothy, the early sanctification of Jeremiah and John the Baptist, will disappear. A most hopeful anticipation would inspire parents prayerfully to teach their little ones from the standpoint herein inculcated, that of spiritual life already begun. But to assume that this life is not begun, and instead that it must be sought and found only after the period of early childhood has departed, is to blight much that is hopeful. It is to seek to generate that which already exists. How false such a theory must prove in practise!

Coming to regard the infant in this light, we must also attach to divine grace a potency which we have hitherto considered impossible. The conclusion had been reached that the Holy Spirit must stand aloof because the infant is a spiritual imbecile, or at least until some delegated messenger could, through baptism, consecrate it to God. But the present theory finds an open door for grace, despite this unconscious state of the infant, and without the mediation of such messenger.

Another practical lesson is this. The delay in teaching and directing children can no longer find its excuse in the inability of the child. How often does the pastor meet with this excuse: "My child is too young; when old enough to understand I will teach it," etc. The child

thereby is treated as a spiritual imbecile even during the most plastic and important years of its life. Meanwhile evil possesses the fruitful soil, and either renders it hard like the roadside, or sows the seeds which afterward spring up as thorns and briers, to choke the Word and render the otherwise fruitful soil barren and unfruitful.

The Scriptures evidently consider the soil of the child's heart the richest of all for the seed of the truth, and the most productive of beneficent fruit when properly cultivated.

The general tenor of the Scriptures favors the view that early childhood is the most hopeful period of life.

The theory of this day of revival and evangelistic methods assumes that the infants are not in a saved state; that no provision has been made for them except they first be baptized. Depravity holds sway, and therefore it is safe to treat all, even the baptized, as lost souls, rather than saved ones. This latter view has obtained as deep a hold upon some branches of the Church as the one that "grace is dependent entirely upon the means of grace" had during the first twelve hundred years of the Church's history.

Upon the presumption that this theory of infant salvation is sound, there must of necessity be some change made also in the manner of presenting the truth; for instead of looking upon the young as strangers to grace, and teaching them so, the Church would teach that grace has begun its work already, and from that standpoint it would train children up in the way they should go. Instead of regarding them as weeds unfit for the garden of the Lord, it would accept them as tender plants to be carefully cultivated and trained therein. Instead of lambs astray and lost, they would be as lambs in the fold to be carefully housed and fed. Instead of babes in sin to be saved by and by, they would be looked upon as babes in Christ, and hopefully fed without delay upon the milk of the Word. Instead of

being taught to repent of sin that they might become subjects of grace, they would be taught to repent of it that they might grow in grace. Indeed repentance and conversion would, instead of preceding the work of the Holy Spirit, be looked upon as impossible until after a state of grace had existed in the infant, since repentance presupposes a previous state of grace in all such cases.

The clergy would also lay more stress upon the duty of parents and upon piety in the home. Responsibility as parents would be clearly pointed out. The children's hearts would be viewed as good soil producing tender plants, rather than as unbroken soil in which the seed could not be sown. In short, children would be nurtured from the standpoint of grace begun rather than that of grace to be secured.

Well does Bushnell say: "God does expressly lay it upon us to expect that our children will grow up in piety, under the parental nurture, and assumes the possibility that such a result may ordinarily be realized. 'Train up a child,' etc.—how? For future conversion? No, but 'in the way he should go, that when he is old he will not depart from it.' " *

And after the age of childhood had passed, and some of those who had been carefully trained had wandered away from the fold, or as prodigals had left their father's house, they would be exhorted to repent, not as those who had never been subjects of grace, but as backsliders who had forfeited that grace and should repent of their backslidings, be converted and *regenerated* (born *again*). This would be the true Scriptural way, for it was the way the old prophets preached to such; and the general tenor of the whole New Testament is the same.

The danger of backsliding—one of the most serious ob-

* "Christian Nurture," p. 35.

stacles with which the Church has to contend—would also be dwelt upon more in our pulpit. “Take up the stumbling-block out of the way of my people” (Isa. lvii: 14) is a call to the Church to-day. If the call were heeded and the sin of the backslider exposed, we could hope for much greater results, particularly if all who are out of the Church were included among the backslidden, for they, too, have forfeited divine grace. They in infancy were the subjects of saving grace. They were once members of the spiritual household and are now prodigals far from their Father’s house, wasting their substance in riotous living. They had oil in their lamps, but now they have gone out. They once were in the fold, but now are wandering sheep. They, too, had talents committed to their care as servants, and have hidden them in the earth. They are in a true sense backsliders, and as such they should be made to feel that they are guilty of forfeiting their spiritual heritage. They have sold their birthright. They are “a sinful people, laden with iniquity, a seed of evil-doers, children that are corrupters; *they have forsaken the Lord, they have provoked the Holy One of Israel unto anger, they are gone away backward*” (Isa. i: 4).

Let all such be made to understand that to ordinary wickedness they have added that of departing from the living God. No truth would be better calculated to arrest the sinner or to lead to his repentance.

Just how far this view of infant salvation would tend to quicken the life of the Church will depend upon the manner of its presentation. The writer’s experience has been that it has a decided effect in stimulating parents, so that they and their children are more regular attendants upon the Word. Never in his experience has he secured so large an attendance of the young upon instructions in the Catechism and the preached Word. Preconceived notions re-

specting the necessity for delay in training children have changed somewhat, and given place to that of looking upon them as saved from their infancy, and to be trained as such to continue in the ways of the Lord. A larger number of the young become members of the Church, and it is firmly believed that a much larger percentage of them continue stedfast in their faith. These hopeful indications are from only a few years of practical instruction, yet the effect has been very apparent. There is not the shadow of a doubt but that such a course persisted in from year to year will accomplish excellent results. It is well calculated to awaken parents without the pale of the Church, as well as to increase the devotion of those within it. It will arouse latent energies to new devotion, and greatly enhance the efficiency of the pulpit. In the firm belief that the view here presented is Scriptural, and that the greatest good to the greatest number may be secured through such training, this work is now given to the public. May the blessing of the great Head of the Church attend it.

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